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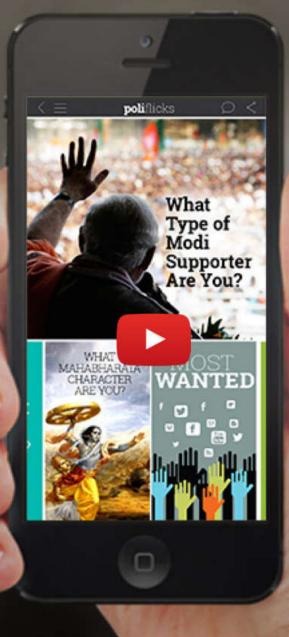
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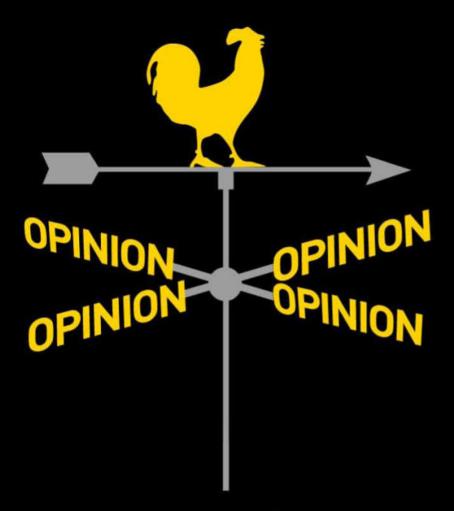


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FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

ver the last 16 months, images of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, as a diplomat and a statesman, have flashed at us from all across the globe. He's walked among the Terracotta Warriors in Xi'an, addressed the Australian Parliament in Canberra, visited the Golden Pavilion in Kyoto and the Sheikh Zaved Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi, and hung out with Mark Zuckerberg at the Facebook headquarters in California. Although his government has started various transformative projects such as Make in India, Digital India and Smart Cities, Modi's biggest success has been on foreign policy-telling the world that India is open for business and ready to compete in a new global market.

The most tangible message has been India's renewed partnership with the US on several political and economic fronts—initiated during Modi's bilateral meeting with President Barack Obama on his US trip last year, strengthened during Obama's return visit this January, and cemented further on Modi's second stateside visit this September. This time, Modi rubbed shoulders with the world's top technology executives Zuckerberg, Apple's Tim Cook and Google CEO Sundar Pichai. While getting a closer understanding of Silicon Valley, home to countless Indian engineers and executives, he wanted to connect this crucible of the digital world, with its innovation and technology, to India.

Modi's flair for foreign policy has surprised many who thought it would be his weakest area considering his inexperience in this field. But apart from speeches and photo ops, there is a grand plan to his peripatetic style of conducting foreign affairs. Wherever he goes, he pushes hard for FDI, which has resulted in a 27 per cent increase in foreign investment in 2014-15 over the previous financial year. Along with working on defence and security, his foreign policy moves are always linked with enhancing domestic goals—be it Digital India, Make in India, Skill India, or the return of black money. This is a connection that not many



2014 COVER

Indian leaders have managed to make in the past, although Modi has to back these promises with concrete action in fixing systems at home.

In this week's cover story, Group Editorial Director (Publishing) Raj Chengappa, who travelled to cover the Prime Minister's United States trip, does an on-the-ground examination of his foreign policy to reveal the world according to Modi. Tracking his achievements and shortcomings across the globe, and weighing them against India's most crucial foreign policy needs, Chengappa analyses where we stand with our immediate neighbours, our strategic allies, our trade partners, and maps the road ahead.

his week also marks the first anniversary of Modi's ambitious Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, which aims to make India open-defecation- and rubbishfree by 2019. I was delighted when the Prime Minister had nominated me and the India Today Group as Swachh Bharat ambassadors last December because we'd been called upon to be part of a mission that I wholeheartedly believe in.

In keeping with our commitment to cleanliness, the India Today Group is launching the annual Safaigiri Awards, in which we honour initiatives and individuals—a booklet of the awardees is enclosed in this issue—who are striving to make India cleaner and healthier. I believe these awards are important because they will create a spirit of competition and throw up examples others can learn from.

The principal criteria were threefold—innovativeness, cost-effectiveness, and scalability—and it's been wonderful to see a whole host of very fine contenders vying for the award in each of the 13 categories. The road ahead may be long and arduous, but the energy and inventiveness of our nominees makes me confident that we will eventually get there. So congratulations to all those who have won. To those who didn't, keep up the good work and best of luck for next year!

(Aroon Purie)





Swachh Bharat requires a swachh mindset, which treats filth as a national shame.



SOCIETY DINING

The Prodigal Chefs

Floyd Cardoz sparked it off, Atul Kochhar and Gaggan Anand follow suit. Why our top chefs overseas are making a beeline for Mumbai.

UPFRONT

GLASS HOUSE

72 GLOSSARY

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Cover by ROHIT CHAWLA DIGITAL IMAGING BY AMARJEET SINGH NAGI

NATION **VASUNDHARA RAJE**

Raje's Plank to Resurgence

Rajasthan has met with some success in its new drive against graft. Can it sustain the campaign or is it a move to divert attention from the Lalit Modi saga?

INTERVIEW MALALA YOUSAFZAI

> "The Terrorists Who Shot Me **Motivated Me** to Stand up for My Rights."



DEFENCE ACQUISITION MESS

The Big

Contracts and policies worth billions are stuck in Manohar Parrikar's defence ministry, affecting preparedness of the armed forces.



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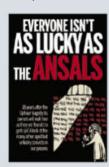


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MOST POPULAR INTERACTIVES

Too old for jail? Age came to the rescue of the Ansal brothers in the Uphaar fire case, but does the same rule apply to others as well? http://bit.ly/1KPMILu

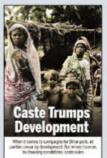




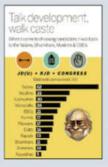


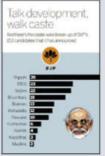


Déjà vu The political discourse in Bihar began with development but caste has slowly taken the centre stage in the run-up to the elections. http://bit.ly/1P3LoJZ









India's Robin Hood Index What if the richest Indian born in a particular state comes to the aid of its poor? http://bit.ly/1RdCglj









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MOST RETWEETED & FAVOURITED

Will cut off tongues of writers for

daughter of a sanitation worker

insulting Hindu gods: Sri Ram Sene 200 Team India went to watch @KapilSharmaK9's new film 165 India's youngest PhD scholar is the



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The Digital Junkies

SEPTEMBER 28, 2015

Why we should worry about our growing addiction to the virtual universe





Technology is meant to simplify our lives, but excessive dependence on it has only complicated our lives.

KRISHAN KALRA, via email

Switch It Off

Remaining wired 24/7 is not only affecting us physically, but is also taking a toll on us emotionally, psychologically and socially (Smartphone Slaves, September 28). As a result, we are unable to respond to real-life situations properly. We must curb our digital instincts, as virtual can never be a substitute for the real. VIJAI PANT, Hempur

Technology must be used to enhance our productivity in personal and professional lives rather than hinder it. Shunning it is not an answer to the problem of digital addiction. People, instead, should be encouraged to use it wisely and not allow it to eat into their personal time.

K.R. NAMBIAR, Navi Mumbai

The best way to cure oneself of digital addiction is by switching off gadgets for a certain duration during the day, and forgetting about them. It's easier said than done but one needs to

Stop the Alienation



The Peoples Democratic Party and BJP's alliance in Jammu and Kashmir has been a 'marriage of inconvenience' (Mufti's Struggle to Deliver, September 28). Despite the tall promises made by the BJP before and after the election, the BJP-led government at the Centre does not seem eager to release

grants to the state. Consequently, Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed has not been able to bring about any perceptible change in the lives of Kashmiris, making their alienation more pronounced than ever. Separatists will be quick to exploit this feeling of disenchantment.

VIPUL PANDE, Nainital



www.indiatoday. intoday.in MULAYAM EYES BIHAR'S M-Y PIE

Mulayam Singh is irrelevant in Bihar. He can't dent the secular alliance's prospects. franklyspeaking

Mulayam can play the kingmaker if he can convince Asaduddin Owaisi-led AIMIM to join his alliance.

Bhaskara Rao

If the Samajwadi Party can get even a

fraction of the Muslim votes, the BJP stands to win the elections in Bihar.

Arayindh

SANIA'S WIN IS NOT GOOD FOR INDIAN TENNIS

The new generation of players has to say no to complacency to win singles titles. Balagangadharan

Cheers to the writer for showing the courage to write about the true state of affairs of Indian tennis.

time for things that exist beyond the virtual world. SHWETA CHAUDHARY, *Delhi*

make that effort to make

A Meaty Debate

The rationale behind the ban on sale of meat during the Jain festival of Paryushana is questionable even if the practice is decades-old and has been followed by various governments in the past (More Than Meats the Eye, September 28). The purpose of practising ahimsa is served, but only superficially by sparing the animal on some odd days. As against this bizarre objective, a meat ban means people are denied the choice of food, and the livelihood of those associated with the meat industry is affected.

BISHAN SAHAI, via email

The Maharashtra government's decision to ban the sale of meat during a Jain festival in the state is similar to Saudi Arabia telling non-Muslims not to eat or drink in public places during Ramzan. Unlike people in West Asian countries, who don't cry hoarse saying they belong to modern nations, India's claim to be one sounds hypocritical. Also, banning a certain food item for the sake of a community may lead to other communities asking for similar bans in future. This is a dangerous trend. K.S. JAYATHEERTHA, *Bengaluru*

People put up with a lot of trouble during Ramzan when major roads are blocked for holding namaz. Similarly, sections of roads are blocked, including national highways, to allow kanwarias smooth passage into the city during Shivratri, sometimes even constructing makeshift shelters for them by encroaching on arterial roads. There have been no protests against such practices. So, why all the noise about meat ban during a Jain festival? SUBHASH CHANDRA AGARWAL, Delhi

A Risky Move

It's ironic that Mulayam Singh Yadav, the founding father of the 'mahagatbandhan' in Bihar, has parted ways with his secular partners to form a fresh alliance with the NCP and other parties (Mulayam Eyes Bihar's M-Y Pie, September 28). After tasting electoral success



No Winners Here

It is unfair to deride Sania Mirza's achievement in lifting the US Open women's doubles crown with Martina Hingis (Sania's Win Is Not Good for Indian Tennis, September 28). Admittedly, India's showing in singles has been on the wane in recent years. But while lamenting the loss of sheen in one aspect of the sport. we should not belittle the recognition earned in another. Sania's wins have kept the torch of hope burning by inspiring many youngsters to take up the sport. ANJUM M. SAMEL, Thane

The article made me think if the achievements of Sania Mirza and Leander Paes can be compared to that of Ramanathan Krishnan. Viiav Amritrai and Ramesh Krishnan, who made a name for themselves in the singles circuit. The current crop of players such as Yuki Bhambri and Somdev Devvarman have failed to make an impact in major ATP events. The rise of Paes and Mirza has not helped India in producing more talented singles players. BAL GOVIND, Noida

with Muslim-Yadav support in Uttar Pradesh, the Samajwadi Party chief must be hoping for a similar script to play out in the Bihar elections. But this is where the veteran leader may have got his calculation wrong, as it's the Dalits and the OBCs who decide the results in Bihar. PRAMOD SRIVASTAVA, Delhi

Mulayam Singh Yadav wanted to play the kingmaker post-elections which forced him to opt out of the Nitish-Lalu combine. A difference over allotment of seats was only a ploy to form a third front ahead of the elections. The only aim of this last-minute alliance is to wrest votes from the kitty of JD(U) and RJD and keep the option of aligning with the BJP open.

K.R. SRINIVASAN, Secunderabad

Bihar elections present one of the best spectacles of the dance of democracy. This election, in particular, can make or break the careers of some political heavyweights who are desperate to get a fresh shot at power. Mulayam Singh Yadav has dropped the first bomb, right before the elections, by opting out of the alliance that he had helped form. With the results expected around Diwali, it will be one cracker of an election. P. ARIHANTH, Secunderabad



America's Modi Moment

Not only did it seem premature to call it prescient but also involved pushing the imagination. She was a young African-American who had just heard the prime minister of "one-sixth of the world's population" talk at one of the world's largest single-day charity concerts. In his thickly accented English, Narendra Modi had addressed the 60,000 young people who had gathered in New York's Central Park. And he signed off with a cult line from the



Star Wars movie series: "May the force be with you."

The crowd had roared in approval and she put it in words. "He nailed it," she said, and walked away into the Manhattan evening. She didn't even know what he was doing in her country. He was yet to address thousands of raucous Indian-Americans who would lap up every word he uttered. He had not met some of the top CEOs in the world. He had not met President Barack Obama and agreed to revitalise the stagnant India-US relationship.

But after Modi did all that and more, at the end of a five-day swing through the US, it was hard to not recall the young woman's words. If this was an expedition in perception management, the sailor and his ship had reached the shore safe and dry. And not laden with just the effusive words of his hosts and supporters.

by Y.P. Rajesh

October 13, 2014



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DISTORTING HISTORY WON'T HELP

hanges in names, altering cultural landmarks are very minor changes in the broader scheme of things for the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). It has a worldview that was formed in the 1920s by K.B. Hedgewar. Europe's colonialism was at its height at the time and the colonial powers were obsessed with the idea of homogenous entities such as distinctive White race and Black race, racial purity, the Occident and the Orient etc. The notion of exclusiveness and racial purity led to Hitler's 'pure Aryan race' thesis, subjugation of 'others' and World War II. Hedgewar picked up this very colonial notion of exclusiveness and brought it into the Hindu society. M.S. Golwalkar made the subjugation of minorities, and denying them civil rights and the right to vote more explicit as a model of self-assertion of the Hindus. It is their vision that the RSS has been developing and implementing.

A big problem lies with the understanding of mythology and history. The very utterance of the term 'mythology' or 'myth' immediately sends out a signal that all that goes under its heading is untrue or lies. History by contrast contains facts. There is a gross misunderstanding here and not all of it is accidental; a good part of it is deliberate. In reality, every society, every religion has mythologies that are cultural constructs meant to impart certain lessons and moral values; these are not reconstructions of factual information. Mythologies have a much wider reach in society than knowledge of history has. An illiterate villager may imbibe more cultural nuances from mythology than from historical data and facts presented to him. Mythology is also constantly reconstructed. Every time a TV show depicts a mythological character, it is different from the earlier ones. Nehru, in Discovery of India, was very sensitive to how much of culture and moral values the common people of India have imbibed from myths and he was very proud of it. History does not have that kind of liberty. It is strictly bound by its methodological discipline. History and mythology belong to two different genres of knowledge and culture, not inferior or superior to each other.

After years of studying and teaching history I realise that the past gets constantly constructed and reconstructed by the present in accordance with its needs, and it gets constructed differently according to each segment's needs—like the Sangh's needs.

The state is a major formative influence on society's culture. Though the state and society interact with each other, there is no denying that the state exudes a powerful command over what it wants society to think. The Soviet Union wrecked the discipline of history (and soon enough itself) by imposing a single view of the past. Even Pakistan. The state, chiefly under

the rule of Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq, has wrecked society through mindless intervention and dogmatic Islamic doctrines. It is an effort of intervention of a similar nature that is being planned in India by the RSS.

When I was an undergraduate student of history in

the 1950s in Delhi University, history was taught as ancient (that ended with Harsha's rule), medieval (ended with Aurangzeb's death) and modern (that started with the Battle of Plassey). The discussions in history classrooms were mainly limited to religion, the Hindu rulers and the Mughal kings. From the '60s, historical discourse started changing with social formations, socio-economic structures, class struggles and technological advancements coming to the fore. From the '80s, even newer themes, theories and methodologies came into existence within the subject—the history of ecology, women, habitats, perceptions, time, inter-personal relations, gender identity of polities and so on. A second major transformation has been disengaging of history from Eurocentrism and looking at the world we inhabit today as the cumulative effect of contributions of all societies and civilisations throughout history. Global history in the truest sense. In other words a huge movement towards a pluralist vision, accommodating and appreciating immense diversities.

Now, as the world is moving towards a pluralistic vision, the RSS with its scheme of homogenising history is moving backwards by bringing back those same debates, fixating history on religious conflicts abandoned by historians decades ago. And anyone not going along gets the label of being a Marxist (Coming to think of it, there have been fewer than half-a-dozen committed Marxist historians in India over the past half-a-century and they were constantly disputing one another). Religion, which is one of the variables in historiography, is being considered the only single determinant by such organisations for whom the only emphasis is projection of macho Hindu might and glorification of the Hindu past. The present constructing the past to serve its current needs. The Sangh Parivar could teach a lesson or two to the British in 'divide and rule'. The colonialists

were novices in comparison.

When you look at the past, it has many competing versions and this is what makes history so dynamic and exciting.

The role of social sciences is that of a constructive critic of the society. The disciplines evolve through their own inner dynamism. The state's intervention distorts both the disciplines and the society it seeks to control. Thankfully, India is not Pakistan and the attempts to distort or destroy history will not succeed.



The RSS with its scheme of homogenising history is moving backwards by fixating history on religious conflicts.

The writer is a former professor of medieval history at the Centre for Historical Studies, JNU, Delhi

BRIDGING THE VALLEY

One reason behind the rapturous welcome accorded to PM Narendra Modi in Silicon Valley is the latter's souring relationship with China. Beijing's increasingly hardline view on foreign firms—Google, Twitter and Facebook are blocked in China—and concerns about cyber espionage have changed the earlier

bullish mood of US tech firms. At his Digital India event in San Jose on September 26, Modi promised CEOs in the US that he would ensure cyber security and protection of intellectual property rights—their two biggest concerns in China. At his Facebook Townhall event the following day, he highlighted China's "different approach" to social media. The PM joked that when he recently wished Chinese President Xi Jinping on his birthday, most users of Weibo were completely unaware it was Xi's birthday.



DEBAJOYTI CHAKRABORTY

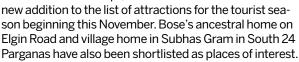


CHANGING VIEWS

R SS chief Mohan Bhagwat is set to unveil a biography of senior VHP leader Ashok Singhal on October 1. Ashok Singhal-Hindutva ke Purodha (authority on Hindutva) is written by Mahesh Mamchanka, a businessman. VHP officials say Singhal was initially reluctant to allow someone to write his biography because he believes a biography of a living person is against Indian culture, but finally consented. On the other hand, the RSS chief had stridently opposed 'vyakti pooja' (individual worship) in the past. One wonders what made him change his mind now.

NETAJI TOUR CIRCUIT

Tour operators in West Bengal will now highlight venues related to Netaji Subhas Bose on Kolkata's travel map. This follows CM Mamata Banerjee's declassification of all 64 secret files on the freedom fighter. The Kolkata Police Museum, where the files are kept, is the





K. Chandrasekhar Rao has tweaked the rules in order to ensure that at least four out of every five job opportunities and seats in educational institutions of the state go to natives of Telangana. For instance, only students who have studied for four out of seven years (Classes IV to X) in Telangana, before getting admitted



to degree or PG courses, can avail of the government's fee reimbursement scheme. In case of jobs, aspirants must have done their schooling from Class IV to X in Telangana to get a state government job. It is also mandatory for job aspirants to obtain nativity certificates issued afresh by the state government.



STRIKING THE WRONG NOTE

Tealth Minister J.P.
Nadda beamed with joy when musicians arranged by the Himachal Mahasabha welcomed him with raucous fanfare and drum roll in Chandigarh on September 27. There was one problem though. The venue selected to honour him was a hospital—PGIMER—a 'silence zone' where even a honking car draws frowns from the security staff. Although someone realised and the dholakwallahs were sent packing, Nadda, deciding to observe hospital rules, had nothing to say.

HEAD START

he Ministry of Defence has finally appointed a new director general (DG) to head its premier think tank, the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA). Jayant Prasad, India's former envoy to Kathmandu and Kabul, will take over as DG-IDSA on October 1 with a three-year tenure. The post had been vacant since August last year when the previous DG, Arvind Gupta, took over as deputy NSA.



GLASS HOUSE

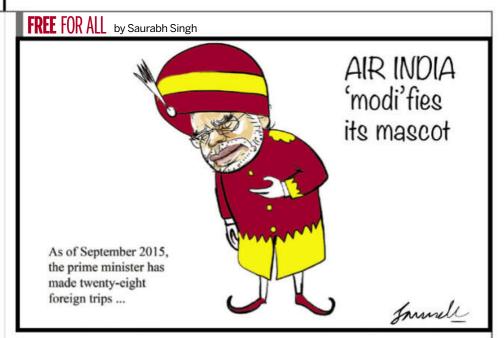
ELUSIVE JUSTICE



okayukta Justice Y. Bhaskar Rao has become a headache for the Congress government in Karnataka after the SIT probing an extortion racket, allegedly operated by his son, made Rao a prime witness in the case. The former iudge has gone on long leave. The government expected him to guit after he was made a witness in the case, but the judge seemed unmoved. Now, the government will hold an unprecedented special session of the legislature to remove the lokayukta. Seems Justice Rao has decided not to go down without a fight.

THE FIGHT **BEGINS**

The UP assembly l elections are more than a year away but the fight for votes seems to have begun already. On September 26, SP MLA from Shikarpur, Mukesh Sharma, and BSP's likely candidate Devendra Bharadwai hurled abuses at each other in Salempur village as both of them wanted to be one of the pallbearers for a deceased villager. While the two leaders continued to fight, three others who were already waiting were joined by a fourth one to shoulder the bier.



NO ACHHE DIN **FOR BIHAR**



CHANDRADEEP KUMAR

The BJP will not release a manifesto for the Bihar elections due from October 12. The party will instead present a series of vision documents. Party sources say BJP President Amit Shah is not in favour of a manifesto because of the huge expectations raised by the one released before the Lok Sabha polls last year. Shah reportedly feels many points mentioned in Lok Sabha manifesto can't be fulfilled in spirit.

THE WEEK IN NUMBERS

15 MONTHS



Time it took Guiarat brand ambassador Amitabh Bachchan to give up his LPG subsidy.

RS 150



Fine imposed by a Sultanpur court on BSP general secretary Swami Pasad Maurya for derogatory remarks in 2014 about Hindu gods.

RS 42-40 LAKH



Andhra Pradesh CM N. Chandrababu Naidu's net wortha drop of Rs 20 lakh since he became the CM last year.

MISFIRED SHOT



Rajasthan PCC chief Sachin Pilot has kept the Congress relevant in Rajasthan with his aggressive attacks on CM Vasundhara Raie. But in doing so he recently ended up embarrassing his senior party colleague and former CM Ashok Gehlot. Pilot accused Raje of distributing mines without auctions. Trying to puncture the charge, state BJP chief Ashok Parnami said in most of the cases, allotments were cleared during Gehlot's stint. An embarrassed Gehlot demanded that Raje should respond herself. Again, Pilot's attack on Raje over her proximity to Lalit Modi saw Parnami responding with examples of Gehlot's dealings with a builder, a jeweller and a hotelier.

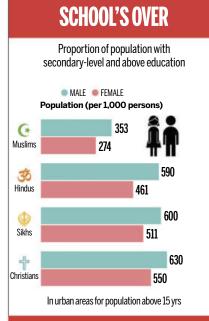
with ANANTH KRISHNAN SOUDHRITI BHABANI ASIT IOLLY SANTOSH KUMAR AMARNATH K. MENON, ARAVIND GOWDA, ROHIT PARIHAR AND PIYUSH SRIVASTAVA

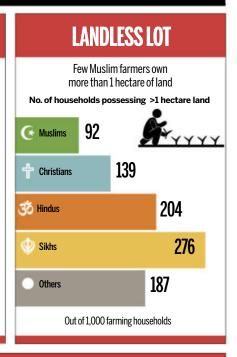


The hue and cry over Muslim population growth overshadows the real issues; Muslims lag on most of social and economic indicators

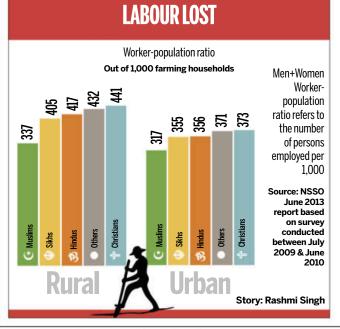
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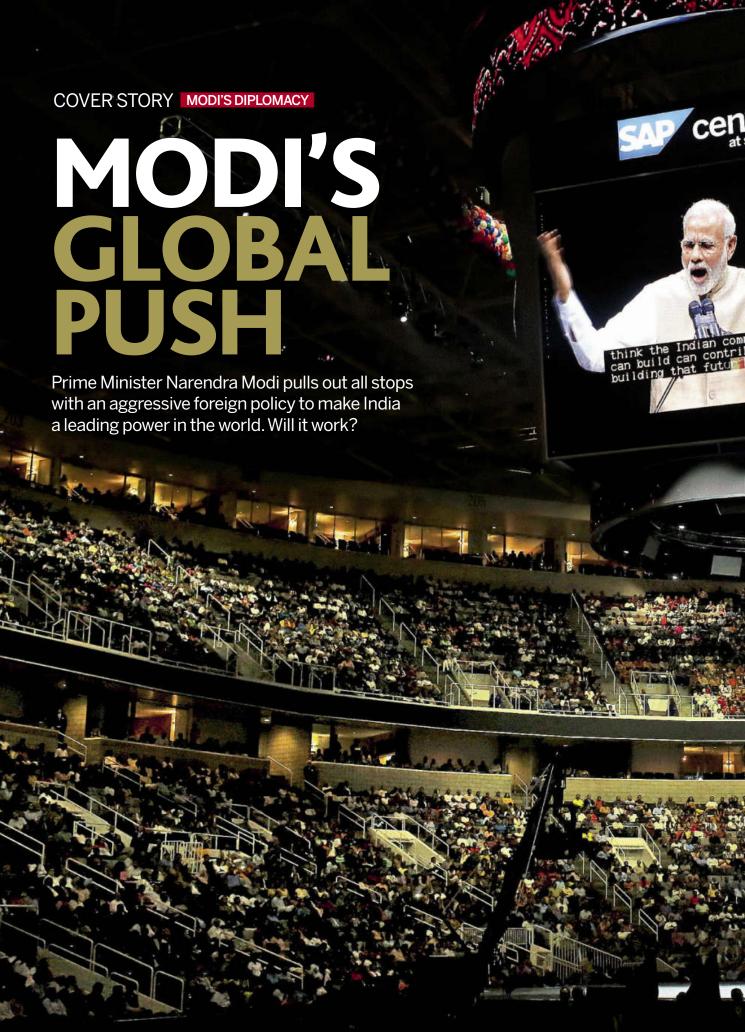
EMPTY POCKETS Monthly per capita household consumer expenditure Muslims ₹1.125 Hindus ₹1,543 👚 Christians ₹1.659 **Sikhs** ₹1,402 Others (For rural & urban areas)





IDLE HANDS Labour force participation rate Out of 1,000 farming households 415 423 437 459 368 379 380 382 ₹ 22 Men+Women Labour force refers to the population which supplies or seeks to supply labour, includes both the 'employed' and the 'unemployed' Urban







COVER STORY MODI'S DIPLOMACY

By Raj Chengappa in New York & San Jose

diplomacy was a chess game, Prime Minister Narendra Modi would invariably choose to play white. In the past year and a half that he has been at the helm, he has

evolved a unique, energetic, attacking and proactive brand of diplomacy that is part visionary, part politician, part salesman and part theatre but always captivating. In doing so, Modi has transformed the international narrative about India from one of a flailing power to that of a resurgent global force.

In San Jose on September 27, where he addressed a stadium packed to capacity with the diaspora, it was for the most part theatre. A bevy of *desi* dancers entertained the crowd with Bollywood favourites, before Modi arrived to a thunderous applause. A dozen US Congressmen of the region, including Minority Leader in the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi, lined up to greet him. Modi, with his folksy, homespun analogies and intimate style of oratory, soon whipped the crowd into a frenzy.

When the euphoria reached its peak, Modi enunciated his view of the world in somewhat simplistic terms. Everyone, he said, agrees that the 21st century belongs to Asia but, of late, word is out that it will belong to India. He then asked why? The crowd roared back, "MO-DI, MO-DI". He laughed and answered, "No. No. Not because of Modi. The change has come because of you—the billion-plus people who now believe that India should not lag behind anymore. That the time has come for India to lead the world."

The big shift that Modi wants to bring about is to change the idea of India as a balancing power into what he calls "a leading power". He believes that it is time a nation that houses one-sixth of humanity and is soon to be the world's third-largest economy, takes its rightful place under the sun. Modi also reckons that with the US on a gradual decline and the Chinese shaky, India as the world's largest democracy

has the opportunity to lead the world if it plays its cards well.

As part of the quest for that status, Modi is pulling out all stops for India to become a Permanent Member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), a proposal that had been languishing since 2005. The UNSC is the diplomatic power club that currently has only five Permanent Members that also enjoy veto rights-US, Britain, France, Russia and China. In New York, among the many heads of states Modi met, the one who invoked curiosity was Ralph Gonsalves, President of St Vincent and Grenadines, a tiny Caribbean island that has a population one-hundredth the size of Delhi. Snide remarks were passed about Modi filling up his itinerary with tiny island nations as few big countries wanted to meet him.

Modi, though, had a purpose. India had recently thwarted efforts, particularly by China and Pakistan, to block its entry into the UNSC by winning a decisive vote in the UN General Assembly to take up the expansion of the council through text-based negotiations. The President of St Vincent and Grenadines was among its most vocal supporters. Now to gain entry into the UNSC, India needs the support of two-third members of the 193-strong General Assembly. Every nation counts and Modi and his team are working on garnering votes as they would do in a domestic election, wooing even the smallest of nations.

Modi also brushed aside criticism from Yashwant Sinha, his party colleague and former external affairs minister, who in an interview to India Today TV charged his government with making unrealistic claims about getting into the UNSC. Sinha called the "begging" approach, adopted by the G4 countries (Brazil, Germany, India and Japan) who were vying for UNSC seats, "demeaning". Ignoring the barbs, Modi boldly convened a summit meeting of the leaders of G4 countries—Angela Merkel of Germany, Shinzo Abe of Japan and Dilma Rousseff of Brazil and got them to agree to push for expansion of the council in its 70th-year



(CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT) MODI WITH US PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA, RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR FRANÇOIS HOLLANDE, JAPANESE PM SHINZO ABE AND IRANIAN PRESIDENT HASSAN ROUHANI

celebrations starting in October. When Modi met US President Barack Obama soon after-his fifth meeting with the world's most powerful man since he took over as PM-he reminded him of his commitment to back India's bid for a seat at the high table.

It is not for nothing that Obama called Modi "a man of action" in their second meeting last year. There is a marked contrast to the way Modi conducts diplomacy as compared to his predecessor Manmohan Singh. While Singh is credited with some bold foreign policy initiatives, including clinching the India-US nuclear deal, he preferred to put his head down and pushed quietly to achieve the goals he set.

Singh was highly respected for his economic acumen but when it came to summitry, he was seen as a shrinking violet preferring to stick to the text prepared by his aides. His style was much like the famed '24-Character' advice Deng Xiaoping gave Chinese diplomats: "Keep cool-headed to observe, be composed to make reactions, stand



THE BIG SHIFT **THAT MODI** WANTS TO BRING **ABOUT IS TO CHANGE** THE IDEA OF **INDIA AS A BALANCING POWER INTO** WHAT HE CALLS "A LEADING POWER".

firmly, hide our capabilities and bide our time, never try to take the lead, and be able to accomplish something."

Modi, on the other hand, is not averse to taking risks and questions the need to remain neutral, even welcoming attachments. He is willing to act out-of-the-box as he did by agreeing to purchase 36 Rafale fighter jets on his trip to France to break the logjam over the deal that had been hanging fire for two decades. He does not shy away from being hawkish and pursuing India's national interest aggressively as he did when he sent the Army in hot pursuit of the North-east rebels into Myanmar territory. Modi is everwilling to be the 'first responder', as was seen when he rushed humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations when a quake struck Nepal and civil strife destabilised Yemen. And he has also shown willingness for India to shoulder greater global responsibilities by committing more troops to the UN peacekeeping force recently.

Modi vs Manmohan

In a striking difference to Singh, Modi plans his foreign trips almost as if conducting a prime ministerial campaign. For his action-packed September visit to the US, the Prime Minister prepared months in advance, getting officials to make PowerPoint presentations on key issues and countries and asking them searching questions about outcomes with a brusque: "Kya niklega (What will come of it)?"

After absorbing the briefings, Modi internalises the information and prepares how to handle the situation and what to speak. An aide remarked, "He doesn't allow the message to drive him, instead he drives the message." Modi even goes into details of what gifts are to be presented to those he meets. He cancelled souvenirs of tribal art that were to be given to CEOs of top US companies he was meeting, telling his team that he wanted to present them with a gadget that was "Made in India" to demonstrate the country's manufacturing and technological prowess.

Simultaneously, an army of BJP supporters flew to the US to engage with the diaspora and organise a range









PUTIN, FRENCH PRESIDENT

COVER STORY

of interactions for him. It included staging a rock concert-style rally in the San Jose sports stadium where 1.5 lakh requests were received for the 18,000 available seats. Meanwhile, apart from the all-important meeting with Obama, he pushed his team to pack his schedule for trysts with as many heads of state and business leaders. Modi appeared inexhaustible, wanting to fill every waking moment with meetings and visits. A senior diplomat likened his command performance to a swan that gracefully glides over a lake, but unnoticed, its feet paddle furiously beneath the surface.

The result was a diplomatic Modikrieg: in the five days that he was in the US, he addressed the UN twice, met heads of states of 30 countries, both big and small, interacted with over 50 top US CEOs heading companies with a net worth of over \$4 trillion, broke bread with the iconic czars of Silicon Valley, including a town hall interaction with Facebook's founder Mark Zuckerberg, and generously spent time with large contingents of the diaspora in New York and California.

Style or Substance?

Policy wonks are still divided as to whether Modi has engineered a radical shift in India's approach or, despite the razzmatazz, he has largely continued the policies of his predecessor. Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar, in recent speeches, was clear that with the advent of Modi, India's dalliances abroad are, "not business as usual and speak of greater confidence, more initiative, certainly stronger determination and, obviously, express the growth of India's capabilities. In many ways, they constitute both a larger footprint and a more intensive one."

US foreign policy expert Stephen Cohen differs. He thinks Modi is still "all sizzle and no steak as he is yet to come up with a coherent policy to manage the contradictions or India's neighbours". Congressman and former external affairs minister Salman Khurshid concurs, adding, "Apart from the hype and hoopla, Modi's foreign policy is a continuity of the UPA efforts, much of which the BJP cussedly



NARENDRA MODI POSES WITH CEOs OF FORTUNE 500 COMPANIES IN NEW YORK; THE PRIME MINISTER

blocked when we were in power." A senior European diplomat, however, feels, "Modi has brought focus and clarity to India's foreign policy—he has a compass and it always points North for development."

So are Modi's foreign forays more optics than substance? Do they represent continuity or change? Are there more contradictions than coherence in the way he deals with other countries? And then the larger question: should India be content with reacting to crises or should it be shaping the globe's future? While a year and a half may not be sufficient to give a full measure of Modi's foreign policy, the breadth, range and depth of his engagements stand out. Travelling abroad almost every month, he has touched base with over 100 countries across the world, including all major powers, engaging them in a broad spectrum of issues vital to India and the world.

Modi happy-footing across the globe has almost a single-minded mission. His foreign policy initiatives are directly linked with his domestic goals, particularly economic. The Prime Minister is acutely aware that the ambitious programmes that he has launched, such as Digital India, Smart Cities, Make in India, Skill India or Start-up India, require massive infusion of capital, know-how and managerial skills to bring them to fruition rapidly. That would be possible only if foreign investors came in droves to

pump money and bring in expertise.

So on this New York trip, Modi played host to 40 CEOs of Fortune 500 companies, including Indira Noovi of Pepsi, Marillyn Hewson of Lockheed Martin, Mark Fields of Ford Motor, Kenneth Frazier of Merck, Hamilton James of Blackstone, Ellen Kullman of DuPont, Scott Donnelly of Textron, Rajiv Malik of Mylan, Michael O'Neill of Citigroup, Ginni Rometty of IBM and Gary Cohn of Goldman Sachs. Over a sumptuous Indian dinner prepared by celebrity chef Vikas Khanna, Modi did a hardsell of the business India has to offer, listing the three Ds that give the country a decisive advantage over others: democracy, demographic dividend and demand. He promised them ease of doing business, and stable taxation and regulatory policies.

The pep talk was timely and much needed. When Modi had come on his first visit to the US last year, he wowed American business with his sales pitch and revived international business interest in India after it had almost been written off during the final years of Manmohan Singh's UPA 2 regime. But a year or so down the line, many in big business are concerned that after an initial burst, Modi has not been able to accelerate the pace of reforms and are worried that he is adopting "a course of gradualism", as one of the CEOs put it. They are concerned that Team Modi has a thin bench strength and they see a growing gap between





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MODI'S FOREIGN



WITH FACEBOOK FOUNDER MARK ZUCKERBERG

promise and delivery.

Yet the confidence in Modi's ability to deliver remains high. Paypal chief Don Schulman, one of the participants, said, "The Prime Minister was impressive, positive, innovative and futuristic-India remains on top of our priorities." The Chinese slowdown has also made India more attractive as an investment destination. Adam Aron, CEO of Starwood Hotels and Resorts, who runs a fleet of hotels in India, remains upbeat with Modi at the helm. Meanwhile, Modi's happy feet have brought foot-tapping results. One impact: foreign direct investment has grown by as much as 47 per cent from the countries he visited, showing just how much his high-decibel sales pitch has paid off (see chart).

Modi's recent visit to the Silicon Valley, the symbol of the future, was also by all accounts a roaring success. A galaxy of the best and the brightest made time to see him, including Satya Nadella of Microsoft, Sundar Pichai of Google, Tim Cook of Apple, Paul Jacobs of Qualcomm and Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook. Investment czar Vinod Khosla was impressed with Modi's pitch and said, "It is not political rhetoric—he believes in a digital future deeply and passionately. The key for me is implementation though."

When it comes to social media, few Indian politicians are as savvy as the Prime Minister, who constantly tweets about his meetings and decisions. At

the town hall meeting at the Facebook headquarters, Modi joked that one's status is not judged by whether one is awake or asleep but by whether "you are online or offline". And he showed his human side when he broke down while talking about how his mother had to wash dishes to bring him up.

How the West Was Won

Modi's visit to the hub of global information technology had multiple missions. He used the occasion to whip up support for his Digital India programme to improve connectivity across the country and usher in true e-governance and e-commerce. He also pushed for investments in his other major programme 'Start-up India, Stand up India' for young entrepreneurs to launch ventures. Infosys chief Vishal Sikka, who was also present at the event, said, "I believe that the Prime Minister has both the vision and the commitment to see it through."

Modi was also connecting politically to young Indians back home, who constitute over 60 per cent of the population, by plugging into and supporting an activity that has become as essential as breathing to the new generation.

By the end of his visit to Silicon Valley, Modi had seemingly won the West. John Chambers, Executive Chairman of Cisco, and incoming chairman of the US-India Business Council, told INDIA TODAY: "Modi is a visionary

when it comes to information technology. He is the best politician I have seen who understands its power and potential next only to Bill Clinton when he was president."

Some other were more cautious. Venktesh Shukla, president of TiE Silicon Valley, pointed out that for Digital India to be a success Modi needs to remove the roadblocks by providing incentives such as a tax holiday for start-ups and easy closure and exit for failure. Rohit Bansal, co-founder, Snapdeal, who had gone to the US for the event, added: "The government is in an unenviable position. If it's not driving the digital revolution process it will be asked why not. And if it does push it, it'll be asked why are you impeding it. The policy is right, the pace is the key."

Modi's quest to make India a truly great power, however, depends on his track record of handling two key determinants: his government's ability to deliver an 8 per cent to 10 per cent GDP growth annually in the remaining three-and-a-half years of his term. As important is his skill in managing relations with India's neighbours, particularly Pakistan and China. On the economic front, it was India's stupendous average annual growth rate of 7 per cent to 8 per cent between 1998 and 2008 that saw its stature grow internationally. As major powers eved India's huge market potential and its relative political stability, foreign investors flocked to fuel the growth. FDI

AROUND THE WORLD

Prime Minister Modi's global tours have taken him to 27 countries in the last 16 months as he attempts to craft a new foreign policy based on economic and strategic interests

IRELAND Sept 23, 2015

332 mn Total trade over 2.2bn euros. UN and nuclear trade support. FRANCE April 9 -12, 2015
634 mn Ninth largest foreign investor in India. Key military

hardware supplier.

July 10-11, 2015O Starting point of 1800-km TAPI natural gas pipeline.

July 6, 2015
O Intelligence sharing, defence, counter-terrorism cooperation.

UZBEKISTAN

UNITED STATES Sept 24-30, 2015

UNITED STATES Sept 26-30, 2014

1.8 bn India's largest trading and investment partner. Now, largest source of military hardware.

CANADA ***** April 14-16, 2015**

91 mn Home to a big Indian diaspora. Potential to grow bilateral trade.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES **——**August 16-17, 2015

3.1 bn India's third largest trading partner. Shares Indian concern on state sponsored terrorism.

June 13- 16, 2014
0.63mn BRICS, IBSA
member. Like India,
wants UNSC expansion.

MAURITIUS March 11-13. 2015

9 bn Strong ethnic ties. 68% population of Indian origin. India developing air, naval base on Agalega island.

1.1 bn April 12-14, 2015 Eighth largest FDI

GERMANY ==

Eighth largest FDI investor in India. Also seeking UNSC seat.

> SRI LANKA MED March 13-14, 2015

4.55 mn One-sixth of India's development credit given to Sri Lanka to wean it away from China.

SEYCHELLES **March 10-11, 2015**

40 mn Close defence ties. India has patrolled Seychelles's EEZ since 2009.

NEPAL Aug 3-4, 2014 NEPAL Nov 25- 27, 2014

0.02 mn Key buffer state with China which is increasing political and economic presence.

Graphic by SAURABH SINGH

COVER STORY

grew ten-fold during this period from \$3 billion to \$35 billion. It is sustained economic growth, as China demonstrated, that could single-handedly propel India to the status of a great power and is an important compass for Modi to follow. Understanding this, Modi has pledged to treble the size of the Indian economy to \$20 trillion.

Love Thy Neighbour

Managing India's troubled neighbourhood will prove as challenging as the economy. Modi understood its importance early and declared that his foreign policy would adopt a "Neighbours First" approach. He staged a coup of sorts by inviting SAARC leaders, including Pakistan, for his swearing-in ceremony. He followed it up by making his first visit abroad to Bhutan and in quick succession visited Nepal, Myanmar and Sri Lanka. Modi's neighbourhood policy places a premium on the three Cs-connectivity, cooperation and contact. The idea of linking the countries through roads, trade, energy and people-to-people contact is not new but Modi has given it fresh impetus. He demonstrated that he meant business when he swept aside opposition from his own party to conclude the historic land boundary agreement with Bangladesh which he described as akin to "breaking the Berlin Wall".

On Pakistan and China, his record remains mixed. Modi's initiatives to engage with Pakistan have so far proved to be high-decibel failures with India remaining uncompromising on the issue of cessation of terror and Pakistan overplaying its K (Kashmir) card. Of late, Modi, in consultation with National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, has worked to isolate Pakistan on terror by building a ring of support in countries doing business with it. On his recent trip to UAE, he stunned Pakistan by persuading the Crown Prince to enter into a treaty to jointly combat terrorism. His visit to the seven Central Asian countries—where he held a record 57 meetings in the eight days of tour—was to pursue their support against terror and also to tap their rich energy potential that India could exploit. His forthcoming visit to Saudi

KYRGYZSTAN I RUSSIA = July 12, 2015 July 8-10, 2015

O Military exercises and energy.

TAJIKISTAN ==

July 12-13, 2015

0.46 mn Joint Working

former Soviet airbase it

Group on terrorism.

India wants to use

has refurbished.

MONGOLIA IIII May 16-17, 2015

O Supports India's UNSC candidature.

107 mn Ties built on space,

terrorism and defence ties.

political, nuclear energy, anti-

CHINA III May 14-16, 2015

494 mn India's largest trading partner. Boundary dispute and ties with Pakistan present strategic challenge.

SOUTH KOREA 💓 May 18-19, 2015

146.5 mn Bilateral ties on a strong economic foundation, raised to strategic partnership in 2010.

JAPAN 🌘 Aug 30-Sept 3, 2014

2 bn Third largest investor in India and to contain China.

SINGAPORE F March 29, 2015

6.7 bn Key cultural, commercial and strategic ties. Eighth largest investment source into India.

FIJI 🕮 🕸 Nov 19, 2014

038% population of Indian origin. Springboard for India's ties with Pacific island nations.

AUSTRALIA Nov 14-18, 2014

57 mn Joint declaration on security cooperation signals closer ties. Also for nuclear fuel.

FDI EQUITY INFLOW (IN US \$ MILLION, APRIL '14-MARCH '15)

KAZAKHSTAN I July 7, 2015 26.11 mn Key pillar of India's engagement with Central Asia. BHUTAN 33 June 16-17, 2014 O India's closest neighbour. Largest recipient of Indian aid.

BANGLADESH

June 6-7, 2015

Land boundary agreement settled in August.

MYANMAR === Nov 11-13, 2014

O Key to India's access to Act East policy and connectivity to south-east Asia.

COVER STORY MODI'S DIPLOMACY

Arabia is part of the plan.

Meanwhile, Modi is pushing hard that the UN adopts a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism that would further put pressure on Pakistan. After spectacular diplomatic failures recently, the Prime Minister is likely to adopt low-key initiatives to engage Pakistan so that the meetings between them do not grab the headlines as they do now. Even the fact that Modi did not shake Nawaz Sharif's hand at the UN made prominent news.

With China, Modi has followed a more nuanced policy that triangulates economic cooperation and security concerns with international politics. Understanding that China has emerged as the new superpower that is challenging American supremacy, Modi went out of his way to pursue relations with strongman Xi Jinping by hosting him in Ahmedabad. China may have snubbed him when border intrusions happened even while Modi and Xi were having a *chai pe charcha* in his home state. But Modi deftly reached out to Japan and Australia along with deepening relations with the US, signalling that India was not averse to teaming up with others to contain China.

Modi hopes to leverage India's vast consumer market that China has an eye on to reach a swift and amicable solution to the border dispute and also get Beijing to rein in Pakistan. He startled the Chinese with his bluntness when, on a visit to Beijing, he told his counterpart Li Keqiang that economic relations are tied to progress on the border dispute. He also spoke frankly about his concerns of China providing Pakistan funds, skills and manpower to build infrastructure projects in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir that could be detrimental to India's interests.

With the US, Modi has followed a policy of pragmatism, continuity and greater engagement. He has put the mojo back in the relations with US business by promising to steadily bring reform and deregulate the Indian economy. In January, when Obama was the chief guest for the Republic Day celebrations, the two countries signed a significant Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean Region. It would involve India in both

REUTERS







AFP

REUTERS

maritime security of the region and in expanding its trade links to Asia-Pacific, including major treaties under negotiation.

India and the US are now engaged in issues spanning defence, counter-terrorism, homeland security, intelligence sharing and law enforcement. Modi kept big business happy by clearing a \$3-billion deal to buy Chinook helicopters even as complaints had been building that he had belied expectations by going slow on economic reform.

With Obama in the third year of his final term as President, he is looking to leave a legacy of action, particularly on climate change. The pressure is on Modi to deliver a climate action plan or Intended National Determined Contribution (INDC) at the major UN convention in Paris in December that would see the world's third-largest

greenhouse gas producer agree to significant checks in its emission levels. Modi has been proactive on climate action, pushing for a massive increase in solar and other eco-friendly energy generation. But coining the phrase 'Climate Justice' he is clear that developed countries must keep their word on providing funding and technology for clean technology. Recently he even smartly handed over a copy of his book titled Convenient Truths to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon that contains the action he took as Gujarat chief minister to mitigate and adapt to climate change. How India drives the climate change process will also be a determinant of its status in the world.

To his credit, Modi has moved away from the old approach of hyphenating relations that had hobbled India's choices. India is now juggling with several balls simultaneously to expand its





scope and reach. So while it pursues an independent relationship with Iran, whatever be the US pressure, it boldly engages with Israel. While it maintains its traditional ties with Russia, it sees no contradiction in buying arms from the US. It strives to improve ties with Japan and China, while it brings a new sense of urgency in its relations with ASEAN by changing the lexicon from "Look East" to "Act East". As Jaishankar points out, "India's current position makes it possible to simultaneously pursue multiple relationships that creates a virtuous cycle where each can drive the others higher."

The Sangh Connect

Modi's other major foreign policy thrust is wooing the 25 million-strong diaspora across 60 countries with the largest number in the US, Canada, MANAGING
RELATIONS WITH
NEIGHBOURS,
PARTICULARLY
CHINA AND
PAKISTAN, WILL
BE KEY TO THE
GLOBAL POWER
QUEST. SO FAR,
IT IS A MIXED BAG.



(CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT) MODI WITH CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING, PAKISTANI PM NAWAZ SHARIF, BHUTAN PM TSHERING TOBGAY, BANGLADESH PM SHEIKH HASINA AND SRI LANKAN PRESIDENT MAITHRIPALA SIRISENA

Britain and the Middle East, apart from islands such as Fiji and the Caribbean. Non-resident Indians continue to be the single-largest contributors to India's foreign remittances accounting for over \$70 billion annually. They are top professionals and, along with People of Indian Origin, are influential in the countries they live in. Modi's home state Gujarat has a large migrant population and he understands the clout and money power they command.

Rather than official machinery, he employs senior BJP and RSS workers to organise meetings with 'Bharatwasis'. Prominent among them is Ram Madhav, the BJP general secretary and foreign policy ideologue. Madhav and his core team put up the impressive rally at the SAP Center in San Jose apart from organising meetings in UAE and Australia. By involving the Sangh

Parivar in his foreign initiatives, Modi is ensuring that unlike Singh, he has his party's support for any major initiative he takes on foreign policy.

Madhav said that Modi sat down with his party colleagues and evolved 'Panchmari' or the five new pillars of foreign policy that he says, "Reflects Bharat's age-old cherished cultural and civilisational values in a more significant and profound manner than ever before." The five pillars are samman (dignity and honour), samvad (greater engagement and dialogue), samriddhi (shared prosperity), suraksha (regional and global security) and sanskriti evam sabhyata (cultural and civilisational linkages).

Modi won the Parivar's appreciation and support by successfully appealing at the UN to declare an International Yoga Day. In his recent speeches, he never missed a chance to mention RSS founders and heroes. Modi used the occasion of the UN Sustainable Development Summit recently to mention RSS founder Deendayal Upadhyaya's contribution to conservation, linking it to his 100th birth anniversary celebrations. Noticing Sikh protests wherever he went in the US, including a light aircraft flying over the SAP stadium in San Jose with the banner: 'India out of Khalistan', Modi asked the gathering to fete Bhagat Singh whose birth anniversary was being celebrated on that day. As long as Modi preaches a brand of Hindutva-lite, he is on stronger ground both domestically and on foreign soil.

Modi's quest for global power status for India has just begun. Ashley J. Tellis, a leading US foreign policy expert, says, "At the moment it is an aspiration, not yet an achievement. On the three principal pillars—powerful enough to be a geopolitical force, powerful enough to be able to shape global economic calculations and powerful enough to become a lodestar for the world—India still has a lot of promise but it is not there yet." Team India has its work cut out.

Follow the writer on Twitter @raichengappa



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THE BIG FREEZE

Policy-making and defence reforms hit the slow track, and contracts worth billions are stuck in Manohar Parrikar's defence ministry, affecting preparedness of the armed forces

By Sandeep Unnithan

ast month, a communication from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) electrified the defence ministry. A note to the defence secretary said that the PMO would conduct a review of pending defence proposals every month. It signalled that the slow progress of defence contracts was now a high-level concern.

Nearly a dozen defence contracts worth more than Rs 10,000 crore are stuck at the penultimate stage, awaiting clearance from the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS). Trapped in the bottleneck are deals for spy planes, torpedoes, laser designation pods and bombs and refuelling tankers.

A \$3.1 billion deal for US-built gunships and transport helicopters was signed during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the US in September. The helicopter contract, the NDA's first significant defence deal, was cleared by the CCS just three days before Modi's state visit and a week before the expiry of an unprecedented 13th price extension

unprecedented 13th price extension on the three-year-old contract from manufacturer Boeing Defense, Space & Security (BDS).

Defence officials point out that the slow pace could impact operational preparedness, particularly as some of the equipment is meant to add teeth to existing projects under induction. The Kalvari, the first of the six indigenously built Scorpene submarines, will shortly begin sea trials off Mumbai without its principal weapon: torpedoes. A proposal for acquiring Black Shark torpedoes has been pinballing around the defence ministry since 2012. A

contract to buy 164 laser designation pods for the IAF's 49 Mirage 2000 aircraft, which are being upgraded, is yet to be signed. The delays have hit the IAF the hardest—it has at least four big-ticket contracts languishing in the final stage.

"These contracts have been in the making for several years and are meant to make up operational voids," says Air Marshal Padamjit Singh Ahluwalia, a former Western Air commander. One stalled contract is a cornerstone of India's strategic partnership with Japan. The deal for buying 15 ShinMaywa US-2i amphibian the production line had closed.

"Procrastinating on proposals, most of which are on government-to-government route, does no good to bilateral relations or India's image as an emerging power. Rather it contributes to the perception of India being a difficult place to do business in," says Amit Cowshish, a former financial adviser in the MoD.

There has been a slow build-up to the PMO's anxiety over the clogged MoD pipeline. In early August, PM Modi chaired a meeting at the PMO which highlighted concerns on the delays within the defence ministry. In the

second week of August, the PM's principal secretary, Nripendra Misra, chaired another meeting with private sector representatives. The representatives of private sector defence firms complained that they were yet to see any progress in the government's blueprint of defence hardware in India. Simple policy tweaks were taking months, they said. The Defence Procurement Policy 2015, which will reveal how the Modi government will develop its defence industrial

base, is yet to be released.

Defence ministry delays are the stuff of bureaucratic legend. Evaluations of the multi-billion dollar Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft (MMRCA) contract dragged on for over a decade. The negotiation with French warplane maker Dassault, whose Rafale emerged the winner, continued for three years. In April, the process was rendered void after Modi announced a direct buy of 36 Rafales from France. The \$4.3 billion deal is being negotiated, not by the MoD, but between the PMO and the French President's office.

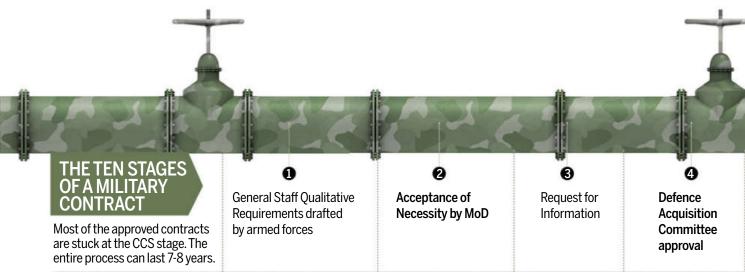
PMO OFFICIALS HAVE CHAIRED MULTIPLE MEETINGS TO ADDRESS THE DEFENCE INDUSTRY'S CONCERNS ON THE POLICY PARALYSIS IN



THE DEFENCE MINISTRY.

aircraft for \$1.6 billion, discussed during Modi's visit to Japan last September, is yet to take off. The offer is yet to even reach the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) despite keen interest from the PMO and the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and attractive offers from the Japanese manufacturer for complete transfer of technology to make the aircraft in India.

A Rs 8,000-crore proposal to buy three additional C-17 Globemaster-III heavy lift aircraft was delayed for so long that when the Ministry of Defence (MoD) approached manufacturer Boeing recently, they were told that



In May last year, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley let slip in a press briefing that he was holding the defence ministry portfolio in the interim. It became clear in six months for whom: Goa Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar. A reluctant occupant at first, Parrikar promised to bring fresh air into the musty corridors of South Block when he took over last November with a promise to inject life into the MoD.

YES MINISTER

Parrikar came across as a scrupulously honest minister who insisted on paying his own bills at his temporary lodging, the naval officers' mess at Kota House; a politician who combined Antony's honesty with George Fernandes's scruffy dress sense, blunt speak and good intent. Here was a leader with an impressive track record of running a state, albeit a tiny one, who had a grounding in technology which allowed his hubris to be forgiven: the constant reminders about his IIT degree.

It was almost too good to be true. A proactive Parrikar began his tenure with a flurry of clearances. Among his biggest achievements was to replenish the Army's ammunition reserves, which had dipped to being enough for just three days of intensive fighting, to at least 14 days. He approved mammoth projects such as one involving the acquisition of six nuclear-powered attack submarines and seven stealth frigates worth more than \$20 billion. In January, he hit out at the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), long a services bugbear for delayed projects. DRDO chief Avinash Chander's

tenure was curtailed and Parrikar split the posts of director general, DRDO, and scientific adviser to the defence minister. But since then, there has been silence. MoD watchers say Parrikar has been overwhelmed by the system and the enormity of the problem. Armed forces brass say the new stalemate now descending on the MoD, rivals the one under Antony.

"Frustration with his work style is setting in because he is not even maintaining the status quo that existed earlier," a general says.

Parrikar's Friday evening sprints to Delhi airport to catch the last flight to Goa, where he spends the weekend, are now raising eyebrows. On August 28, he left midway through a DAC meeting for the airport.

The armed forces, particularly, are chafing at an MoD circular sent out this May: mandatory approvals of the Integrated Financial Advisors (IFAs) for all proposals from June 1. The order was passed without increasing the IFA staff and this has resulted in huge bottlenecks because files are piling up with the IFA. As of August 31 this year, armed forces officials estimate they have been able to spend an

average of only 20 per cent revenue budgets allotted to them, as against at least 50-60 per cent during the same time last year. Armed forces officials see a conspiracy. "Earlier, capital expenditures lapsed because weapons were not bought. This year we won't be surprised if revenue budgets are surrendered as well," a senior army official says.

The MoD bottlenecks are not because of a lack of intent on Parrikar's part. In an informal discussion on the sidelines of the India Today Conclave in March this year, Parrikar emphasised he would not junk UPA-era purchases. "We have to build the structure," he said referring to the pending projects. "If we don't buy what is pending, there will be nothing."

In May this year, nearly six months after taking over, Parrikar laid the blame for the mess in the MoD on UPA's defence minister, Antony. "He (Antony) cannot escape the responsibility but I will not assess the level of damage because everyone has a style of functioning," Parrikar told news agency PTI in an interview. "What I inherited was stalemate. Arunji had tried. But in many issues, there was hardly any time

for him because he was there only for five months. But he had started moving the wheels and I think I have started adding speed to that."

Parrikar may have cleared warships, transport aircraft and artillery projects worth over Rs 2 lakh crore in the past year, but only a few of them have materialised into contracts. This is because the Acceptance of Necessity (see graphic) has a two-year validity. The





defence minister in November last year was a Rs 15,750-crore proposal to buy 814 mounted gun systems—155 mm howitzers fitted on a truck. It is vet to materialise into a Request for Proposals (RFPs). There is consternation among the four Indian consortiums, L&T, Bharat Forge, Punj Llovd and Tata Power SED, who are waiting to submit their offers.

The reason for these delays, as the CEO of a private sector defence firm says, is because Parrikar has focused on getting more competition in contracts without clearing the hurdles down the pipeline. Decision-making is sluggish and the CEO squarely blames the bureaucracy. "They are playing 'Yes Minister' with Parrikar," he says, referring to the 1980s British TV satire about a wily status-quoist bureaucrat. Files move so slowly in South Block that bureaucrats quickly lose track of them. One MoD bureaucrat who frantically asked his junior where a procurement file was, was told it had not left his office the whole time.

Parrikar, who prevailed over the MoD bureaucrats to clear the One Rank One Pension (OROP) between Rs 8.000 and Rs 10,000 crore, a move that has endeared him to the ex-servicemen's community, has been unable to speed up the decision-making process for other priorities.

However, the fault doesn't lie with the MoD alone. Defence ministry sources cite interference from the PMO and finance ministry even in routine procurements. One of the few projects to actually get past the post STUCK AT THE LAST MILE

The slowdown in clearance could impact operational preparedness

> LASER DESIGNATOR PODS FOR UPGRADED MIRAGE 2000s

Rs 3.115 crore STATUS With CCS since November 2015



AIRCRAFT (AIRBUS A330 MRTT)

Rs 9,000 crore STATUS With CCS since 2014



SPICE AIR-TO-SURFACE **BOMBS**

Rs 700 crore STATUS Stuck at contract negotiation stage



Rs 650 crore STATUS With CCS since 2012

IL-78 PHALCON/AWACS

Rs 5.000 crore

STATUS With CCS since 2014





GUEST COLUMN VIVEK RAE

RESTRUCTURE MOD TO MAKE IN INDIA

The Acquisition Wing should be tasked with promoting India's defence industrial base

here has been much sound and fury to "make" in India over the last two decades, especially in the context of defence manufacturing, with little progress on the ground. The strategic target set by eminent personalities such as APJ Abdul Kalam was to change the 70:30 (import:indigenous content) ratio for defence equipment of the early 1990s to 30:70 over the next 10-15 years. Alas, this has not happened. It would not be inappropriate to characterise the decade gone by as a lost decade for indigenous defence manufacturing, especially in the private sector.

The current NDA government has been very vocal about promoting Indian manufacturing, with indigenous defence manufacturing leading the charge. A number of initiatives have been taken for this purpose, including (i) increase in the FDI limit for defence industry from

26 per cent to 49 per cent; (ii) greater priority in defence acquisitions for 'by' (Indian), 'by & make' (Indian) and 'make' transactions; (iii) setting up of a committee of experts in May 2015 to evolve a policy framework to facilitate "make" in India and realign Defence Procurement Procedures (DPP) to achieve this objective; and (iv) setting up of a committee of experts in September 2015 to recommend criteria for selection of stra-

tegic partners from Indian industry for manufacture of major weapons, systems and platforms.

In pursuance of this thrust, several Indian companies and original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) have entered MoUs to establish manufacturing and maintenance, repair and overhaul facilities in India. While these green shoots are promising, the impact on the ground in terms of contracts awarded is not visible so far.

In its report submitted in July 2015, the committee of experts constituted in May 2015 has made several useful suggestions. With regard to "internal adjustments within MoD", the committee has observed in its report that the "series of initiatives taken as a result of the recommendations of the group of ministers in 2002 led to greater integration within MoD, including the services. The constitution of the Defence Acquisition Wing and various coordinating and decision-making boards reflects the desire to bring about greater synergy. Production policies and procurement procedures would hereafter constantly

impact upon each other. Thus a greater convergence would need to be brought about between the Department of Defence Production and the Office of DG, Acquisition."

While this recommendation points the way forward, it leaves the matter hanging in terms of an action plan for bringing about this convergence. In fact, the present institutional framework within the MoD is not suited to bring about this convergence and needs to be re-configured. Department of Defence Production (DDP) is entrusted with the responsibility for development of indigenous defence manufacturing, both in the public and the private sector. However, DDP does not have the leverage with the Indian industry as well as foreign OEMs, which the Acquisition Wing commands. The lead role for promoting the defence industrial base should, therefore, belong to the Acquisition Wing.

> At the same time, the department of defence also needs to be restructured, with the Acquisition Wing being upgraded to an independent department to be headed by a secretary-level officer reporting directly to the defence minister. This will relieve the defence secretary of the burden of handling complex acquisition proposals, and provide him more time to address

issues relating to defence policy and strategy, bilateral defence cooperation, as well

as administrative matters relating to the armed forces.

As India seeks its place in the global governance architecture, its organisational structures need to be reinvented, drawing on the experience of great powers. In the US, for instance, the Pentagon has fulltime under-secretaries for acquisition as well as for policy. The latter is the counterpart of the Indian defence secretary, with the former having no clear counterpart in India. Upgrading the Acquisition Wing to full secretary level will remove this mismatch.

In a larger context, the MoD needs to study the institutional framework for decision-making in major defence ministries across the globe and determine how best the framework for decision-making at the policy level can be improved in India. This is overdue, not only in the MoD, but also in the Ministries of External Affairs and Finance.

Vivek Rae was DG, Acquisition, MoD, 2010-12

was one for Laser Designation Pods (LDPs) from Israeli weapons maker Rafael. The pods enable the upgraded Mirage 2000 fighter jets to accurately lob precision guided munitions on ground targets. Last November, a draft CCS note was sent to the finance ministry which asked them about the antecedents of the Israeli firm. The MoD replied that the LDPs were an operational necessity for the 49 Mirage jets being upgraded by France and that it had obtained vigilance clearance. In February 2015, the finance ministry asked the MoD whether the LDPs could be converted into a Make in India project. The MoD's detailed reply: it was difficult at this late stage since 30 per cent offset costs were included in the \$280 million contract. Any change would lead to the contract being scrapped. In April 2015, just as the project was readied to go to the CCS, the PMO raised the same query. Could the LDPs be converted into a Make in India project? The case is now pending with the defence secretary since July.



THE CRUCIAL DEAL TO BUY 15 AMPHIBIAN AIRCRAFT FROM JAPAN IS YET TO TAKE OFF

FUNDS SQUEEZE, POLICY JAM

That the government does not have the funds to clear the entire backlog of defence purchases is Delhi's worst-kept secret. Current trends indicate that the Modi government will only prioritise deals such as the Rafale which will advance diplomacy with key partner nations. Parrikar is likely to sign an MoU for jointly producing Kamov 226T light-utility helicopters in

India during his visit to Moscow beginning October 5.

But funds are not the only reason. The real problem, as Cowshish says, has more to do with lack of clarity on production and procurement policies, disjointed and unrealistic defence planning, complexity of procurement procedures, and tardy decision-making. "These issues require to be addressed by the MoD. Without doing



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SPECIAL REPORT DEFENCE ACQUISITION MESS

so, it would not be possible to handle higher outlays."

Even minor modifications in defence policy which would accelerate spending in the defence industry have been interminably delayed. In August this year, the MoD tweaked its offset policy which would allow defence firms to change their offset partners. This demand, that affects offset contracts worth Rs 30,000 crore currently being implemented, had been first raised by defence industry in October last year. It took multiple interventions by Nripendra Misra to finally get MoD babus to notify it. "We lost a year in a simple policy change that would benefit hundreds of small and medium bludgeoned and purchases stalled only on the basis of suspicion of wrongdoing. A third policy on defence agents would require arms firms to list all intermediaries used by the suppliers in any capacity. A month later, only the policy on anonymous complaints has been cleared. Foreign firms such as Denel, Tatra, IAI and Rafale, which have been under a cloud earlier, find it tough to even sell spares because the bureaucracy and the services are still wary of dealing with them.

The slightest whiff of scandal has stalled deals. The IAF's proposal to buy six mid-air refueller aircraft for Rs 9,000 crore has been stuck at the CCS since 2014. Its manufacturer,

chopper deal. The torpedo-maker was cleared by the MoD as an "urgent operational necessity" in 2013, again by the attorney general in 2014, put on hold, then cleared again by the law ministry earlier this year. But till date, it is stuck with the MoD.

Rajeev Chandrasekhar, MP and member of the parliamentary standing committee on defence, says the delays are part of the government's relook at UPA-era off-the-shelf procurements. "There is a need to relook at legitimate defence procurements and how to dovetail it to a Make in India programme," he says. The MoD is still studying the Dhirendra Singh committee report submitted to it in July this year. The 10-member committee of experts headed by the former home secretary recommended changes to India's procurement procedures by bringing in the private sector. Its recommendations are likely to be implemented in the Defence Procurement Procedure 2015 to be launched later this year.

Parrikar is yet to move on the larger institutional reforms that will fix the problems with its defence modernisation. The lack of a comprehensive national security policy that will lead to capability building rather than the present service-driven procurements.

"Since there is no directional guidance in the form of a national military strategy, long-term defence planning is non-existent," says defence analyst Brigadier Gurmeet Kanwal (retired).

This institutional reform, solely the preserve of the defence ministry, will guide the armed forces to jointly prepare for future threats rather than fight past wars. An integrated force planning structure that will, for instance, question why in an era of fast jets the Army insists on buying World War II-era anti-aircraft guns, question the Navy's demand for a new class of enormously expensive conventional submarines or the Air Force's alarming lack of roundthe-clock surveillance of movements across the border. With Parrikar yet to push even basic policy decisions, the future for such major reforms appears bleak.

Follow the writer on Twitter @SandeepUnnithan

A LONG WAY TO GO

A proactive Manohar Parrikar began his tenure with a flurry of clearances but he has been unable to push major policy changes.



Rectified critical ammunition shortages

Cleared OROP

OP (

Defence Procurement Plan 2015 delayed

No military

security strategy

Proactive on defence matters

DAC clearance for strategic projects

Routine policy decisions delayed

Key policies on agents, anonymous letters, blacklisting yet to be cleared

enterprises in the country," says the CEO of a private sector firm.

In May, Parrikar termed exdefence minister Antony's action of blacklisting arms firms suspected of being involved in bribery a "panic reaction" and indicated he would take a new approach towards blacklisting.

Yet, three policies which would allow Parrikar to clear the Antonyera jam have been slow to move off his table. A new policy would make it tough for anonymous complaints to derail procurement—the validity of the letter writer would have to be proved. A new debarment policy would ensure companies are not

European Aeronautic Defence and Space Company (EADS), changed its name to Airbus. The finance ministry asked for clearance from the vigilance wing because Airbus is under CBI scrutiny for a Rs 8,300 crore contract that it entered in 2005 for supplying 43 aircraft to Air India.

The \$200 million purchase of Black Shark torpedoes is another case in point regarding the MoD's cautious approach. The MoD halted negotiations with its maker, Whitehead Alenia Sistemi Subacquei (WASS), because the company was a subsidiary of Finmeccanica, blacklisted for alleged bribery in the 2010 VVIP





WIPING THE SLATE CLEAN

Swachh Bharat requires a swachh mindset, which treats filth as a national shame

By KAVEREE BAMZAI

hen Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) on October 2, 2014, even he could not have imagined the many conversations it would spark. Cleanliness is an issue which touches several taboo topics in India—gender imbalance in use of toilets, the notion of purity and pollution in Hinduism so closely linked to caste, and the inhuman waste disposal system.

Over 53 per cent of India, a figure that goes up to 60 per cent in villages, has no access to toilets. As India struggles to achieve the target Modi has set—spending Rs 1.96 lakh crore to build 120 million toilets across the country, it is also coming face to face with another reality—that building toilets does not necessarily mean that they will be used. The stated objective of SBM is to make India open defecation-free by 2019 by involving every gram panchayat, panchayat samiti and zila parishad in the country, besides roping in large sections of the rural population, school teachers and students.

But as the mission enters its second vear, some studies suggest a mid-course correction. A survey of 3,000 households in rural north India by Research Institute for Compassionate Economics shows that more than 40 per cent of homes with working toilets still had evidence of open defecation. Toilets built by the government, typically smaller, are least likely to be used. It is clear that SBM has to focus attention on changing people's mindsets, but it appears that allocation for information, education and communication in SBM is actually 7 per cent less than in the mission's previous avatar, Nirmal Bharat Abhivan.

Waste disposal is another huge

THE JURY Aroon Purie

Aroon Purie Chairman India Today



N.R. Narayana Murthy Co-founder. Infosvs



Bindeshwar Pathak Sociologist



Chetan Bhagat Author



Vidya Balan Actor



Rajeev Chandrasekhar member, Rajya Sabha



Vinayak Chatterjee Co-founder, Feedback Infra Private Limited



challenge. According to the Central Pollution Control Board, urban India generates about 47 million tonnes of solid waste every year and more than 75 per cent of sewage or wastewater disposal is not treated in India. In urban India, the story goes beyond toilets. Centre for Policy Research Senior Fellow Shubhagato Dasgupta says unless local governments are empowered to respond to the community's demands and do organised collection and scientific disposal of waste, SBM can go only so far.

SBM needs an overall revolution—of individual and community use of toilets as well as of mechanised waste disposal. There is no choice—it has to be done. Poor sanitation and contaminated water cause 80 per cent of the diseases afflicting rural India, and diarrhoea is a leading killer of children under 5, according to UNICEF.

It is inspiring to hear Modi putting toilets front and centre of the national discourse, just as Mahatma Gandhi had written in his Gujarati weekly in 1925 that "a lavatory must be as clean as a drawing-room". Gandhi worked towards it, not only cleaning his own waste but making everyone around him do it too. In Modi's vision of Team India, both citizens and the government have to work together to clean what Gandhi called "our dirty ways".

SBM is a test case for several of Modi's pet ideas—cooperative federalism, with NITI Aayog initiating a conversation between the Centre and states; synergy within the government as SBM schemes intersect ministries of Urban Development; Drinking Water and Sanitation; Human Resource Development; Health; Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation; Rural Development; and

AND THE WINNERS OF INDIA TODAY SAFAIGIRI AWARD ARE...



NADIA, WEST BENGAL

P.B. Salim
Ex-district magistrate
& collector, Nadia



NAANDI FOUNDATION Anoop Ratnaker Rao

CEO, Nanadi Community Water Services Ltd, Hyderabad



CONNAUGHT PLACE

Naresh Kumar Chairman, NDMC



PIRAMAL FOUNDATION Paresh Parasnis

CEO, Piramal Foundation, Mumbai



TIRUPATI Vinay Chand

Commissioner, Municipal Corporation of Tirupati



ROCK GARDEN Anurag Agarwal Culture secretary.

Chandigarh

Environment, Forest and Climate Change; and citizen's participation in governance.

In the following pages, INDIA TODAY highlights examples of men and women who have made clean India their mission. There is P.B. Salim, now district magistrate of South 24 Parganas, who motivated Nadia district in West Bengal, to start using toilets. Or C.P. Dhakal, municipal commissioner, Gangtok, who realised that a cleaner city would attract more tourists—among his many initiatives is the outsourcing of garbage collection from households to eight NGOs and a fine of Rs 20,000 for littering. Even Anoop Ratnaker Rao, who as CEO of social enterprise



MAILHEM IKOS

Col (retd) Suresh Rege and Sameer Rege

Founders, Mailhem Ikos, Pune

METHODOLOGY

The India Today Safaigiri Awards received 200 nominations. Research agency **Indicus Analytics was** commissioned to shortlist 10 in each of the 13 categories over a three-month period. Then a list of five was prepared, which was voted on by a jury comprising Aroon Purie, N.R. Narayana Murthy, Chetan Bhagat, Vidya

Balan, Bindeshwar
Pathak, Rajeev
Chandrasekhar and
Vinayak Chatterjee.
Fifty per cent
weightage was given
to the findings of the
research agency and
50 per cent to the

selection of the

jury members.



PLASTIC-TAR ROAD TECHNOLOGY

R. Vasudevan Dean, Thiagarajar College of Engineering, Madurai



ASSI GHAT

B.N. Chaturvedi National adviser, Sulabh International, Varanasi



GANGTOK, SIKKIM

C.P. Dhakal

Commissioner, Gangtok Municipal Corporation



ERAM SOLUTIONS

Siddeek Ahmed

Owner, Eram Scientific Solutions, Kerala



VICTORIA MEMORIAL

Javanta Sengupta

Curator and secretary, Victoria Memorial, Kolkata



HAVELOCK ISLAND

C. Vasu Executive engineer, Panchayats, South Andaman Islands

Naandi Community Water Services Limited, established in Hyderabad in 2010, is ensuring daily supply of about 100,000 litres of clean potable water to 500,000 people in 350 villages across six states. And there's Saudi Arabia-based businessman and owner of the \$1 billion Eram Group, Siddeek Ahmed, who helped pioneer the e-Toilet, which costs between Rs 1 lakh and Rs 4 lakh and can be remote-controlled. These are just some of the winners of Safaigiri Awards, India Today Group's initiative to make clean India a continuing national obsession and filth a national shame.

Follow the writer on Twitter @kavereeb



A CLEAN SWEEP

"If a district like Nadia can be made open-defecation free, it can be done anywhere in the country."

P.B. Salim 42 Former District Magistrate of Nadia, West Bengal



NADIA, WEST BENGAL

WHY IT WON

The Sabar Shouchagar movement was officially launched in Nadia on October 2,2013 and within a period of just 18 months, the district administration could provide a total 355,609 toilets with about 5.16 million citizens having access to these sanitary toilets.



P.B. SALIM WITH VILLAGERS OF KRISHNANAGAR IN NADIA DISTRICT

TOILET STORIES

The serpentine streets of Sankda village in West Bengal's Nadia district are dotted with mud houses and tiny, white concrete toilets that have revolutionised the region's health and hygiene. Located 27 km east of Krishnanagar town, this tribal hamlet in Jaighata gram panchayat— comprising 287 households—is perhaps the last place in India that you would expect to be open-defecation free. But through the efforts of the local administration, led by Nadia's former district magistrate P.B. Salim, this dream has become a reality.

"Open defecation by villagers used to be common here. Thanks to the Sabar Shouchagar (toilets for all) campaign, it is now a thing of the past," says Salim.

When Salim took charge as the DM of Nadia in 2013, poor sanitation and hygiene in the area caught his attention immediately. For his mission, Salim drew lessons from the success story of neighbouring Bangladesh, a country with a similar

socio-economic situation as Nadia that managed to dramatically reduce open defecation over the last decade. On October 2, 2013, Sabar Shouchagar, which later became a part of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, was launched covering 6,620 villages. Over the next 18 months, they managed to build 355,609 toilets at Rs 10,999 per toilet. On April 30, 2015, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee declared that Nadia was officially open-defecation free.

Today, Nadia has had such a dramatic change of heart that its villagers are treating open defecation as a 'social crime'.

THE WAY FORWARD

Nadia's success has caused a ripple affect across West Bengal. The Trinamool Congress government in the state adopted its model of converting other areas into open-defecation free zones, and 12 of the 19 districts in the state are now involved in the programme.

—by Soudhriti Bhabani

LIQUID GOLD

"Through Sarvajal, we aim to create a technologyenabled ecosystem that can help in providing safe drinking water to underserved communities."

Paresh Parasnis 54 CEO, Piramal Foundation, Mumbai



PARESH PARASNIS AT A WATER ATM AT A CONSTRUCTION SITE IN MUMBAI

EVERY DROP COUNTS

Between 2007 and 2008, the \$3 billion Piramal Group, led by industrialist Ajay Piramal, conducted independent research which showed that half of the diseases that impacted people were water-borne. In areas with a high dependence on groundwater, such as the Piramal family's home town in Bagar, Rajasthan, the high infusion of fluoride in water led to frequent illnesses in children and the elderly. Thus was sown the seeds of a safe drinking water project, Sarvajal, with a pilot project in Bagar in 2009. Soon, the idea of a decentralised drinking water system to provide safe water was mooted, which comprised a purification unit, water transportation mechanism and the dispensing unit or a water ATM, which is RFID (radio frequency identification)-enabled, solar-powered and cloud-connected.

Sarvajal's first ATM was installed in a tie-up with the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation. Thirteen schools near Jaipur, that did not have a reliable water source or power supply, were identified as first part of the project. A hub-and-spoke model was followed, where water was purified at a nearby location, transported to these schools and dispensed through water ATMs. Like any other ATM, a customer swipes a prepaid card to choose the amount of water she or he wishes to collect. The RFID device sends a GPRS message to the Sarvajal server, which authorises the transaction instantly. This server keeps a record of the user's transaction and deducts the amount used on the card. The Sarvajal project has grown twice in size in the past two years. In the last financial year, the initiative served more than 200,000 people, generating an economic activity of over Rs 10 crore.

THE WAY FORWARD

Sarvajal's vision for 2020 is to provide safe drinking water to 1 million people, reaching up to 1,500 locations. It plans to work at construction sites, and with state and central governments for large-scale public private partnership projects. —by M.G. Arun



PIRAMAL FOUNDATION

WHY IT WON

For its Sarvajal project that provides safe drinking water at an affordable price to the underserved through its decentralised water management system, which includes 'water ATMs'. Sarvajal is working across 300 locations in 12 states. serving close to 300.000 citizens.





MAILHEM IKOS

WHY IT WON

Mailhem's 323
plants across the
country have
treated 223,912
tonnes of waste and
generated 14.7
million cubic metres
of biogas over the
past 20 years,
saving around 6,625
tonnes of LPG and
reducing carbon
emission by
140,750 tonnes



THE VALUE OF WASTE

"People need to believe that waste is a big resource. We need such awareness that someday people will file an FIR saying my waste is stolen."

Colonel (retd) Suresh Rege 67 Sameer Rege 39

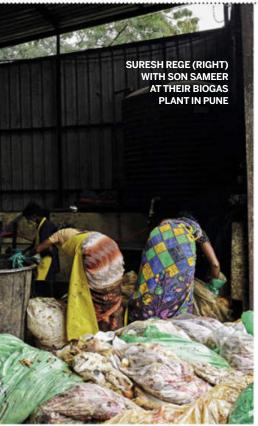
Founders, Mailhem, Pune

STRIKING GOLD

Back in 1995, tea was served with a special story at the B-Vehicle Company in the Mechanised Infantry Regimental Centre (MIRC) in Ahmednagar, Maharashtra. They'd proudly say that the fuel, biogas, was generated from the small portable plant installed there. It was a plant designed by a newly formed company, Mailhem. "The appreciation of our first plant was an achievement for us," says Colonel (retd) Suresh Rege, 67, founder of Mailhem Engineers. Rege had served in the Indian Army for 20 years before retiring in 1990 to turn entrepreneur. He decided to combine entrepreneurship

with community service and set up a solid waste management company in 1995 with friend Vishwas Gokhale, who brought in the technical expertise. "It was an era when biogas meant gobar gas to the common man. There was no concept of waste management," says Rege. But his conviction was such that while naming the company, he picked two Sanskrit words—*mail* which means waste and *hem*, which means gold—to form Mailhem.

With two decades of setting up plants of varying sizes for government agencies, corporate houses and municipal corporations, Mailhem is now one of the leading solid waste management companies in



DANESH JASSAWALA

India with 323 plants across the country and has treated 223,912 tonnes of waste. With a founding team of five and Rege's son Sameer, 39, CEO of Mailhem, they've set up plants of various capacities and for varied uses. Mailhem's plants are seen at Parliament House, the Vaishnodevi temple, housing societies and companies such as Wipro, HAL and TCS in Bengaluru and Bajaj Auto in Pune.

Partnering with French company Ikos, Mailhem is now rapidly expanding its scope of work, bringing in newer technology. Their first PPP model-based plant, being set up in Patna, has a processing capacity of 1,000 tonnes of waste every day.

THE WAY FORWARD

Waste management needs a lot more entrepreneurs to make India cleaner, Rege says. A key decision by the government is to introduce the international practice of a tipping fee for waste managers. With official support coming in, the next step forward is to educate people and create awareness. A simple step is to begin segregating wet and dry waste at the household level. "People need to believe that waste is a big resource," says Rege. —by Aditi Pai

PLASTICS PAVE THE FUTURE

"Plastic roads last without any damage for seven to 10 years. Nearly Rs 30,000 crore can be saved in 10 years."

Rajagopalan Vasudevan 70

Dean, Thiagarajar College of Engineering, Madurai

JAISON G



RAJAGOPALAN VASUDEVAN WITH A BLOCK OF PLASTONE

A WIN-WIN SITUATION

A television programme back in 2001 helped Rajagopalan Vasudevan turn from just another professor at Madurai's Thiagarajar College of Engineering, to India's 'Plastic Man'. "A doctor was misinforming people, saying plastic was getting dissolved in water and animals were dying after consuming this water. I believe it is a poor man's friend, and key to our consumerist economy," the 70-year-old says.

A decade-and-a-half on, he holds the patent for plastic-mixed bitumen roads that have been used to lay over 20,000 km roads across the country, according to the Centre for Innovation in Public Systems.

Besides being more durable, plastic roads cause zero water seepage. Then there's the cost: 1 tonne of bitumen costs approximately Rs 55,000 and 1 tonne of shredded waste plastic Rs 20,000.

THE WAY FORWARD

Vasudevan, who licenses this technology for free within the country, has now extended it to create another material called Plastone. Using only stone or municipal solid waste with plastic, this material can withstand a load of 300 tonnes and can be used to build toilets, walls, canals and pedestrian walkways. —by Saranya Chakrapani



R. VASUDEVAN

WHY HE WON

Patented the environment-friend-ly 'plastic tar road technology', which uses plastic waste to lay roads. These are three times more durable than regular bitumen roads, helping save not just waste but also crores of rupees over the years.



FLUSHED WITH SUCCESS

"I wanted to prove that if technology is used in a smarter way, it could provide a fundamental necessity to millions of people."

Siddeek Ahmed 47

Owner, Eram Scientific Solutions, Kerala



ERAM SOLUTIONS

WHY IT WON

For its visionary innovation in the sanitation sector, the e-Toilet. India's first electronic public toilets, these are self-flushing toilets and can be remotely controlled and cleaned.

LOO, AND BEHOLD!

When Saudi Arabia-based businessman and owner of the \$1.5-billion Eram Group, Siddeek Ahmed, 47, thought of the idea of an electronic toilet project in Kerala, he was thinking about the dearth of public sanitation facilities not just in his home state but in most parts of India. Working with a small but bright team of IT professionals at Eram Scientific Solutions, Ahmed introduced the e-Toilet in 2010.

It was not just the design and the look of these swanky stainless steel toilets that was unique. The e-Toilets had a host of functionalities—a coin-operated payto-use format, selfflushing facility after usage, automatic cleaning of floors, and even a sanitary-pad dispenser. It also has in-built water tanks



OF AN E-TOILET IN CHENNAI

with a capacity to hold 225 litres of water.

Priced between Rs 1 lakh and Rs 4 lakh, depending on the features and the material used, these e-Toilets got a big push in 2012 when the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation provided grants for further R&D on the project.

THE WAY FORWARD

The company's ultimate vision is to develop an e-Toilet which is self-sustainable, can create its own power and recycle its own water and also power the external environment. Also on the anvil is a larger public sanitation infrastructure model that will be of global standards. —by M.G. Arun



THE WATER DIVINERS

"Ours is a unique model which is changing mindsets about the value of clean water."

Anoop Ratnaker Rao 41

CEO, Naandi Community Water Services Ltd., Hyderabad

SMALL PRICE TO PAY

Anoop Ratnaker Rao began his professional career as a hospitality management graduate from Manipal, Karnataka, and Brig, Switzerland, in 1998. He went on to work at the Ritz-Carlton in Dubai, serving the world's jet-setting population. Now, 17 years later, Rao is reaching out to India's bottom 25 per cent living in villages and



ANOOP RATNAKER RAO OF NAANDI FOUNDATION WITH SCHOOLCHILDREN AT VAVILALAPALLY VILLAGE IN NALGONDA DISTRICT OF TELANGANA

thirsting for safe drinking water. As CEO of the social enterprise Naandi Community Water Services Limited (NCWS), established in Hyderabad in 2010, Rao and his team are ensuring a daily supply of about 100,000 litres of potable water to 500,000 people in 350 villages across six states.

The enterprise, which sells clean water on a low monthly subscription, rather than distributing it for free, is changing mindsets about the value of clean water. "Paying a nominal amount, rather than waiting in endless lines to fight over a limited supply, is making villagers realise that clean drinking water is our best health cover," says Mohammed Yousuf, a science graduate, who is in charge of the water centre at Vavilalapally, a village in Telangana's Nalgonda district. In recent years, cases of bone deformity among children have been reported from the area due to high fluoride content in water.

NCWS installed a drinking water plant here that has now become an integral part of the lives of the villagers. It signs a Memorandum of Understanding with the gram panchayat, generates awareness about water-borne diseases, forms water-user committees and works with the villagers until they learn to successfully govern their own assets. Consumers buy a 30-day pre-paid card for supply of 12 or 20 litres per household per day. The price varies between 10 paise and 25 paise per litre depending on the location.

The public service enterprise springs from the Naandi Foundation, instituted by Kallam Anji Reddy of Dr Reddy's Laboratories, and now chaired by industrialist Anand Mahindra. Reddy believed in providing drinking water for a price so that the consumer realised its value.

THE WAY FORWARD

Rao wants to reach more than 800 villages by 2018, providing safe drinking water to 1.5 million people and make NCWS the world's first sustainable community-based drinking water solutions enterprise. The organisation hopes to meet the increasing consumer needs through community-connect activities. "People need to take initiatives towards safe drinking water and water conservation because the prospect of a huge water deficit is staring at us,"

—by Amarnath K. Menon



FOUNDATION

WHY IT WON

The Naandi **Community Water** Services (NCWS) has pioneered a sustainable and decentralised model of water distribution that has since been adopted by several players. Users pay a nominal amount to get a daily supply of clean potable water. Taking a step further, the NCWS is now partnering with state governments to provide clean water to the lastmile villages.



GOD'S OWN CITY

"The journey is long but we can achieve 100 per cent success by building public and community toilets on a massive scale."

Vinay Chand 34

Commissioner, Municipal Corporation of Tirupati



TIRUPATI

WHY IT WON

Despite a space crunch in Tirupati, the temple town handles the movement of 75,000 pilgrims every day. The Municipal Corporation of Tirupati has successfully dealt with not just tourists but also kept the 375,000 residents happy.

A PRABHAKAR RAO

ROOM FOR ALL

The gateway to the richest religious shrine in the world, Tirupati gets more visitors every day than the most busiest airports, largest railway stations, trendiest holiday destinations and swankiest malls. The daily movement of approximately 75,000 pilgrims keeps Tirupati bustling night and day.

The Municipal Corporation of Tirupati (MCT), led by Vinay Chand, a 34-year-old IAS officer, has to deal with not just tourists but also provide sanitation, hygiene and other basic amenities to approximately 375,000 residents packed into a 24 sq km radius. There is a perennial space crunch in Tirupati.

But the MCT is able to offer a clean environment. There are adequate public toilets and clean drinking water facilities. The town is serviced by two solid waste treatment plants. Besides 871 sweepers, the MCT has an automated road-sweeping machine that is used on the approach road to Tirumala and other high-footfall areas of the city. These measures, coupled with a large-scale public awareness campaign, has had a positive impact.

THE WAY FORWARD

With Tirupati being among the 'Smart Cities' of the future chosen by the central government, funds will not be a constraint if the plans are in place. In two years, MCT is working towards offering smarter infrastructure. With Lord Venkateswara of Tirumala as its brand ambassador, Tirupati could not ask for more.

—by Amarnath K. Menon

THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION OF TIRUMALA AT WORK





A RETURN TO GLORY

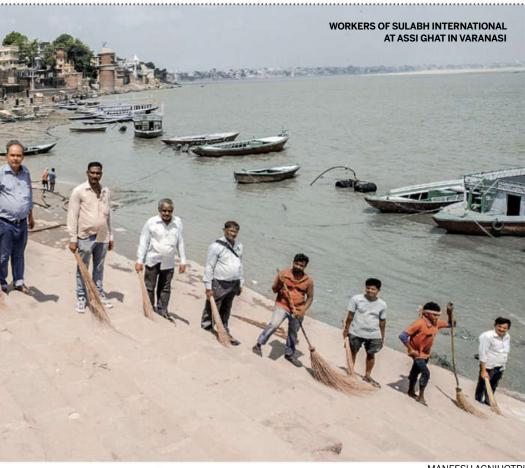
"Ganga is like a mother to us. By cleaning Assi Ghat, we have paid tribute to our mother."

B.N. Chaturvedi 51

National adviser, Sulabh International, Varanasi

ODE TO A RIVER

Less than a year ago, the Assi Ghat on the banks of the Ganga was one of the dirtiest public spaces in Varanasi. Mounds of mud covered major portions of this 400-metre stretch, and its stairs leading to the water were covered with undulated hillocks made of silt and



MANEESH AGNIHOTRI

refuse. Instead of being one of the city's most glorious mythological embankments, it resembled a garbage dump. Incredible as it may sound, a rejuvenated ghat today preens proudly, standing out among all the others in this holy city. This March 17, the historical Budhwa Mangal programme was organised on the Assi Ghat instead of the central Dashashwamedh Ghat.

This dramatic transformation of the Assi Ghat into Varanasi's new cultural hub was brought about in just three months through a massive cleanliness drive carried out by Sulabh International under the watchful eye of the enterprise's national adviser B.N. Chaturvedi. The process started in October 2014, when Varanasi's then district magistrate. Pranial Yadav. now posted in the Chief Minister's Office in Lucknow, allotted Assi Ghat to Sulabh International, which had already started work on six other ghats in the city. The organisation was asked to give Assi priority, and restore it to its former glory, to show what it could do.

It wasn't going to be an easy task. Years of accumulation of garbage and mud had consumed large sections of the embankment. Sulabh employed more than a hundred labourers, who worked roundthe-clock to dig out the original ghat from under the debris using spades and shovels. A few months later, the original ghat started to emerge, and, almost like an archaeological digging, forms and shapes started to become visible. The first stairs of the ghats appeared at the turn of the year, and by February 15, more than 40 were glistening in the sunlight. The drive cost Rs 70 lakh, a small fraction compared to the money spent on various Ganga cleaning projects over the decades. Six months on, the lure of a clean ghat seems to be winning.

THE WAY FORWARD

The next step for Sulabh is to remove silt from lower parts of the ghat with the help of water pumps to bring out 10 more stairs that lead into the river. Once this is achieved, it will focus on making Assi Ghat green, lining it with more than 500 plants. The idea, say the workers, is to make it a model ghat and use it as a shining example of what needs to be done across the city. After all, if Assi Ghat can be restored, so can any other.

-by Ashish Misra



ASSI GHAT

WHY IT WON

One of the mythological ghats of the river Ganga in Varanasi, Assi **Ghat was brought** back to its original lore within three months through a massive cleanliness drive by Sulabh International. It was led by B. N. Chaturvedi, national adviser with Sulabh in Varanasi. Today, Assi Ghat is the cleanest public space in Varanasi.





MEMORIAL

WHY IT WON

On an average,
more than
2.15 million
people visit the
memorial's museum
and its 57-acre
garden every
year. Yet, Victoria
Memorial remains
spic and span—
making it a model
for all heritage
monuments in
the country.



THE QUEEN OF HEARTS

"A lot of the credit goes to our visitors. They love these gardens and museum so much that they take special care not to litter."

Jayanta Sengupta 52

Curator and secretary, Victoria Memorial Hall, Kolkata

A SHINING EXAMPLE

It's been nearly three years since Jayanta Sengupta, curator and secretary, Victoria Memorial Hall (VMH), took charge of the monument. He has had sneakers stowed under his desk for almost as long, but hasn't been able to take a leisurely walk around the sprawling gardens even once. For this historian, formerly a professor of history at Jadavpur University in Kolkata and author of *At the Margins: Discourses of Development, Democracy, and Regionalism in Odisha*, being at the helm of VMH is a job without a moment's rest. Cleanliness is a virtue that Sengupta has pushed down the rank and file, working extra hard to

keep the monument spic and span with the limited staff at his disposal. A team of 19 gardeners, seven sweepers and four casual labourers maintain the 57-acre property.

The museum is a no-plastic zone and about 250 trashcans, all evenly spaced, have been kept to avoid littering. Although toilets are few, they are free-to-use and managed by a private agency. "They used to be run by Sulabh, but we decided to make the service free for our visitors," he says. "It's a tough task keeping them clean. There are times when a single-day footfall can touch 40,000, which is more than what some museums get in a year," says Sengupta. The monument gets a



SUBIR HALDER

steady stream of morning walkers, picnic crowds throughout the day, and visitors who drop in for exhibitions or events such as the Kolkata Literary Meet.

All the cleaning is done in an environment-friendly way. Kolkata-run PSU Balmer Lawrie & Co donated a garbage composter to VMH, making it one of only two place in the city with the facility. This helps turn biodegradable garbage into compost for the gardens. And the old-school home remedy of grandmothers—Fuller's earth or *multani mitti*—is used to clean the monument's marble facade. "With the current levels of pollution, this doesn't keep the facade clean for too long but it is still better than strong industrial chemicals," says Sengupta. But the onus of keeping the gardens clean, he says, is on the public. Luckily, they haven't disappointed.

THE WAY FORWARD

Sengupta and team are planning another block of toilets and are undertaking a massive cleaning and renovation drive to enhance and preserve its aesthetic appeal. "I want Victoria Memorial to be a place where the young come and engage with the vignettes of our past," says Sengupta.

—by Malini Banerjee

TO MARKET, TO MARKET!

"Over 5 lakh people visit this marketplace every day. Only with public awareness and cooperation can we keep this place clean."

Naresh Kumar 51

Chairman, NDMC



NARESH KUMAR WITH NDMC WORKERS

PEACE MEETS PACE

Alpana Das, a 22-year-old student preparing for civil services, describes Connaught Place as a perfect blend of peace and pace, past and present. Das is perhaps echoing the sentiment of every visitor who throngs this British-era architectural marvel spread across three concentric circles; the area houses Central Park, Palika Bazar, movie halls, temples and the city's busiest metro station. A lot of effort goes into keeping this area, where the daily footfall is between 5 lakh and 10 lakh people, clean.

The change began with the Connaught Place Redevelopment Project, which was conceived in 2004, and was scheduled for completion ahead of the 2010 Commonwealth Games. According to New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC) Chairman Naresh Kumar, the civic body spends nearly Rs 100 crore for sanitation annually, of which Rs 20 crore goes into garbage collection.

THE WAY FORWARD

The NDMC has now proposed to give a face-lift to the middle circle of Connaught Place, to lend the whole market area a uniform look. According to NDMC officials, loose cables will be arranged in an organised manner. NDMC has invited artists to display and do artwork on the walls.

—by Kaushik Deka



PLACE

WHY IT WON

This epitome of
British-era architecture is the cleanest
marketplace in India
despite having
a daily footfall
of up to
10 lakh people.



INSIDE WONDERLAND

"We plan to ensure that the Rock Garden is preserved as the unique wonder it is."

Anurag Agarwal 47, Culture Secretary, Chandigarh



ROCK GARDEN

WHY IT WON

The Rock Garden was found to be the cleanest among all parks, both in terms of perception score and the crowd it manages. The average number of visitors in a day to Rock Garden is between 3,000 and 4,000, more than double the number that visits Delhi's Lodi Garden.

FANTASY WORLD

A 'lowly' road inspector with the Chandigarh Capital Project almost since the city's inception, it was in the summer of 1958 that Nek Chand Saini started building what would in time be acknowledged as the most monumental work of "outsider art" in the world. Much of this wondrous 40-acre wonderland sprung from happy childhood memories. Keeping the dream going has been an equally monumental exercise.

Besides a veritable army of workers now deployed by the Chandigarh Administration, led by its Culture Secretary Anurag Agarwal, the upkeep and cleanliness of Chandigarh's Rock Garden owes its success to the universal admiration Nek Chand's creation drew from art lovers across the world who founded the Nek Chand Foundation (NCF) in 1996.

In NCF's volunteer programme, rubbish collection and cleaning are often the first activities of the volunteer groups before they move on to more artistic work, such as helping with the repair of Nek Chand's

figurines. While the flow of international volunteers has slowed down since 2014, a significant portion, Rs 75 lakh, of the gate-fee collections is now permanently routed for maintenance of the garden.

"This was his world," says Anuj Saini, the sculptor's son who was included as a member of the Rock Garden Society, an official body that manages the affairs and upkeep of the garden. Agarwal, who is exofficio chairman of the society, says Saini's inclusion maintains a sense of continuity.

THE WAY FORWARD

The Rock Garden will soon have an important new addition—a true-to-life sculpture of Nek Chand seated on the very rickety old wooden armchair that he used. Plans are also afoot for a structural re-design that will make it possible for visitors to walk a single, continuous route through all three phases of the garden. In the mean time, dozens of workers zealously keep the Rock Garden spic, never failing to advise visitors, albeit politely, to aim for the bin. —by Asit Jolly

ANURAG AGARWAL AT THE ROCK GARDEN IN CHANDIGARH



SPIC AND SPAN

"In Gangtok, cleanliness is part of our mindset now. Even in slum areas, people use dustbins."

C.P. Dhakal 55, Commissioner, Gangtok Municipal Corporation



GMC MEN AT WORK IN GANGTOK

A FEW GOOD MEN

It's 7 a.m. on a misty Thursday. Gangtok Municipal Corporation (GMC) sweepers have started pouring in at Lal Bazaar sabzi mandi in the city's downtown MG Marg. Armed with broomsticks, 22 of them have got down to work in the five-storeyed premises. A total of 105 *safai* workers, six supervisors and four inspectors are involved in intensive cleanliness drives in and around Gangtok on a daily basis. They use 32 trucks for lifting garbage, some starting as early as 4 a.m.

Under the supervision of GMC Commissioner C.P. Dhakal, this drive is being carried out on a war footing as part of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. "Not only in towns, we carry out cleanliness drives in villages across the state. In Gangtok, about 90 per cent coverage has been achieved," Dhakal says. The GMC, which was established in 2010, had been focussed on cleanliness right from the start but the drive has intensified since last August when promoting tourism became one of the state

government's primary missions. Along with improving civic amenities, ensuring a clean city was made a top priority. The collection of solid waste from households has been outsourced to eight NGOs, along with the GMC's staff. This garbage—about 25 tonnes on an average per day and about 45 tonnes every day in summer because of an influx of 60,000 tourists—is taken to a new dumping yard set up in Lower Martam, 16 km south of the city.

The state government has kicked off various campaigns, both on the ground and online. Plastic has been banned, and all carry-bags given out in shops are made of bio-degradable material. "Open defecation too is no longer a problem and is punishable by a Rs 500 fine," Dhakal says.

THE WAY FORWARD

Sikkim is determined to take the Gangtok model across the state. Efforts have already begun in Rangpo in southern Sikkim and in other towns and rural areas across the state. —by Soudhriti Bhabani



VICTORIA MEMORIAL

WHY IT WON

Under the supervision of GMC Commissioner C.P. Dhakal, the cleanliness drive in Gangtok is being carried out on a war footing as part of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. In Gangtok, about 90 per cent coverage has been achieved with the hill town banning plastic and offering tourists a spic and span holiday destination.



HITTING THE BOTTLENECK

"Plastic is most hazardous for beaches. It's not biodegradable, blocks sewage areas and once it piles up, more debris gather around it."

C. Vasu 59 Executive engineer, Panchayat Samiti, South Andamans



T.

HAVELOCK ISLAND

WHY IT WON

The beaches of Havelock Island, especially Radhanagar beach, are plastic-free, clean and welcoming for tourists. There are public toilets on Radhanagar beach, dustbins every 50 metres and cleaners who comb the beach for trash every morning.

AWARENESS AS ALLY

The tall *mahua* and *jamun* trees form a canopy that holds gazebos for tourists to wait at. The tree types are labelled. Barely have you walked past the "Welcome to Radhanagar Beach" sign, and you feel something quaint about the place. It's too spic and span. Yes, you finally report happily to your cynical self, you are on an Indian beach. Havelock Islands' fine white sands and turquoise blue waters would have been welcoming enough even without these facilities, but what makes this beach so popular is the thought that is put into its maintenance. The 1.3-km stretch of the beach is cleaned regularly by 17 employees of the forest department, the tourism department and the panchayat samiti. Ten lifeguards man the beach for the safety of visitors.

Radhanagar's success perhaps lies in the work ethic of the team maintaining it. "We are always on the job on major holidays. That is when most tourists come," says one worker. And that work ethic and passion to keep the island clean runs right through. "I think the people of Andaman and Havelock take pride in their surroundings. Keeping the environment clean is part of our ethos," says C. Vasu, executive engineer of the Panchayat Samiti, South Andaman Islands.

"Keeping the beach plastic-free is the biggest challenge," Vasu, 59, says, and one of their main work has been to spread awareness about the use of plastic. "A strategy we use is to not allow sale of sealed water or cold drink bottles (on the beach). If people want to drink, they will have to do so at the shops and discard the bottles there itself," he says. Releasing sewage into the sea is also punishable by law, and Vasu says most hotels and resorts have their own septic tanks to ensure that.

THE WAY FORWARD

A new water treatment plant is in the offing for Havelock island, and Vasu also talks about plans to install more drinking water stands around the beach. "If there's drinking water freely available then people will stop bringing bottles to the beach," he says.

—by Malini Banerjee



SHEKHAR YADAV

OVER TO YOU, MR FM

With the RBI exceeding rate cut expectations, the onus is now on the government to push ease of doing business and boost domestic demand

By Shweta Punj

t's not exactly been a lovers' tiff. The relationship between the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Finance Ministry can best be described as an arranged marriage gone astray. There are demands and there are reconciliations. So when RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan decided to surprise everyone with a 50 basis point cut in the monetary policy review on September 29-after a growing clamour from industry and government alike to cut rates-economists, market watchers and industry nearly gasped. Because if a word has been used to describe the governor, it has been "hawkish".

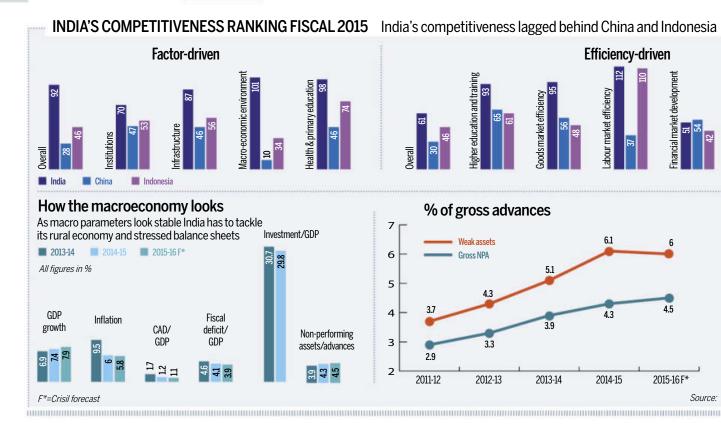
Rajan has been consistent in flagging issues and has refused to 'oblige'

as it were, no matter what. Perhaps that's the reason why he is known to have the Prime Minister's ear on all issues related to the economy. So what does a 50 basis point cut mean for the Indian economy? It could mean bank credit growth gathering some steam considering it has been hovering below 10 per cent for nearly six months. But true to his style, Rajan has taken this opportunity to flag some fundamental issues which make the Indian economy fragile in an environment of global uncertainty and has revised India's growth outlook to 7.4 per cent from 7.6 per cent.

His voice of concern is far from the exuberance echoed by our policymakers travelling across the world. While an interest rate reduction is a welcome move and gives a signalling effect that India is not a rigid interest rate economy, it will be a while before the benefits of it percolate down to the real economy. Banks have been slow to pass on interest rate cuts while they have been quick to cut deposit rates—when banks do not cut lending rates but deposit rates—it earns bankers what is called a greater spread, that is, more profit for the bank. Lowering of base rate would mean less interest income from existing customers and does not necessarily translate into more customers for banks.

As Pranob Sen of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation explains, interest rates in India are some of the highest in the world and to bring them down to desirable levels, which experts say is anything between 2.5 to 4 per cent, would require a 400 basis point cut and that is almost impossible. Rajan

THE BIG STORY ECONOMY



could at best cut rates by 50 basis points and the banks may or may not pass it on to the consumer. However, what an interest rate cut would do is have a signaling effect.

Having said that, the onus is now on the government to ensure transmission and follow a "prudent fiscal path", as Crisil states in its report. India's fiscal policy has to be geared towards pushing domestic demand, addressing the concerns of the rural economy including agriculture, and making India competitive to do business. But the challenges appear daunting.

For starters, there is an apparent disconnect between North Block and the rest of the country. The optimism over macro numbers—inflation, fiscal deficit, current account deficit—often voiced by the finance minister and the PM (see graph) is not shared by many businesses and economists. "There is nothing to be optimistic about. The vulnerability of the global economy will keep the economy down significantly," says D.K. Srivastava, chief policy adviser at EY India.

The slowdown in China and other emerging economies has the potential

to impede global growth. Moreover, China devaluing its currency by 4.4 per cent against the dollar in August this year could potentially also spur a currency war. Indian exporters are seeking an intervention from the government to weaken the rupee further. As Rajan decided to frontload an interest rate cut, the US Federal Reserve's decision to maintain status quo on a zero-interest rate regime was also driven by concerns over global economy.

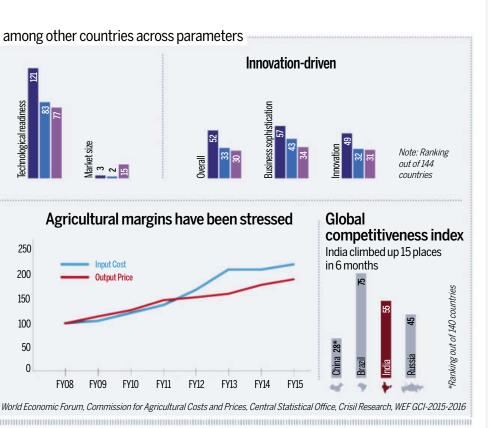
he current global slowdown is somewhat reminiscent of the 2008 slowdown although not as damaging. Economists like to use the term 'Secular Stagnation' of the global economy, which is a long period of slow growth. However, at that time the crisis was rooted in the US and this time the crisis point is China. Srivastava explains that while 2008 was a crisis of private financial institutions and banks, this time it is the high level of non-financial debt, particularly government debt.

According to the most recent release of the Bank for International

Settlements (BIS), the total debt ratios are significantly higher now than they were at the peak of 2007. For emerging market economies, the combined public and private debt has increased by 50 percentage points to 167 per cent of the GDP (Gross Domestic Product). The BIS observes that the pace of credit growth of this magnitude has always preceded major financial crises in the past.

The Paris-based Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development has lowered India's growth forecast to 7.3 per cent in FY 2016. While India will continue to face challenges from the global economy—reflected in falling exports—government and private demand will have to grow 12 per cent each if India needs to grow at 7 per cent. Currently, the government demand is at 2-3 per cent in real terms and private investment demand is fragile at 5-6 per cent.

A recent RBI study highlighted continuing contraction of capital expenditure in India since fiscal 2012. It also highlighted that in FY 2016, planned investment has almost dried up. Frontloading capital expenditure is one of the ways through which the



government can stimulate demand, provided that it is able to sustain it. Reduction of interest rates or the monetary route is one way.

Among the government's many difficulties is a constraint on the amount it can borrow, if it has to stick to its fiscal deficit target. It also cannot do much about expenditure, neither raise nor cut it, as much of it is committed. Nearly 80 per cent of revenue expenditure is committed towards salaries, pensions and interest payments. Economists say that it could be difficult for the government to sustain increased capital expenditure as it is currently cutting on revenue expenditure, and tax revenues are likely to be slower in the later part of the year.

The world economy is likely to be sluggish for the next three years and more, which is expected to impact India's exports and also the celebrated Make in India campaign. Considering that countries such as China have developed capacities, they are most likely to outsell India. India's share of manufacturing at 13 per cent of GDP is one of the smallest.

A comprehensive strategy to

address India's fledgling rural economy should perhaps be priority for the government. Taking cooperative federalism forward, economists say now would be a good time to get state governments to borrow more than the stipulated 3 per cent of GSDP (Gross State Domestic Product) from the market. The 14th Finance Commission had recommended that the states be allowed to borrow more if they meet certain conditions. A majority of the states meet the conditions. The states should make a concentrated effort to increase spending on infrastructure. The public sector undertakings and central public sector enterprises could go on an expansion mode. "Such measures could lead to a multiplier effect, and encourage private investment," adds Srivastava.

"What the government can do is relentlessly push for ease of doing business because interest rates can only mildly support growth. You also need support from fiscal spending," sums up D.K. Joshi, chief economist at Crisil. Hopefully that message has already got across to North Block.

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RAJE'S PLANK TO RESURGENCE

Rajasthan has met with some success in its new drive against graft. Can it sustain the campaign or is it a move to divert attention from the Lalit Modi saga?



PURUSHOTTAM DIWAKAR

By Rohit Parihar

ack in mid-June, when Vasundhara Raje was being questioned and critiqued by the media and the opposition about her alleged proximity to tainted former IPL chief Lalit Modi and his investment in her son and Lok Sabha MP Dushyant Singh's Niyant Heritage Hotels Private Ltd., the Rajasthan Chief Minister went into a huddle with senior officials. The meeting came up with the decision that, deliberately or otherwise, offered a way out of the unwanted spotlight on Raje. In the process it brought up a new issue to beat the opposition with, and change the discourse in the state: a massive reshuffle in the police department.

Raje's message to her officers was simple, according to people present in that meeting: clean-up the administration. The list released on June 19 showed as many as 65 IPS officers had been reshuffled. The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), which had been largely ineffective since Raje's return to power in December 2013, received special attention, and a few officers seen as professional and dynamic. Among them were its new chief, Director General, ACB, Navdeep Singh, and Inspector General Dinesh M.N. While Singh was mandated to revive the near-dead ACB, it was Dinesh's first posting in the police department since his release on bail last year after seven years in iail in the infamous case of the alleged fake encounter of Sohrabuddin.

Since then, there have been more than a hundred arrests until September 30—an average of nearly one a day. Many of these officials were reportedly caught red-handed accepting bribe. While the Raje administration has been somewhat successful in changing the public discourse and shifting attention from the Lalit Modi affair, critics say despite all the noise, many of the arrests were made over petty crimes. Take the arrest of Mool Chand Mali, for instance. As an assistant in the electricity department in Ajmer, Mali was caught while allegedly accepting a bribe to restore power connection to a farm in June (see box).

Not surprisingly, an impression spread that the ACB was targeting only the small fish, even as the Mines, Urban Development and Local Bodies, Power, Public Health Engineering and Excise departments are alleged to house a number of unscrupulous officials.

The ACB, whose 700 officials, with a unit headed by an additional SP in each of Rajasthan's 33 districts, has now been mobilised to cultivate informers, RTI activists and other sources and informants. And it had its first big catch on September 16. In Udaipur, the bureau arrested a middleman named Sanjay Sethi. He was charged with taking Rs 2.55 crore bribe to allegedly allow reopening of a mine that was ordered closed by the department not long before. By that afternoon, as six more people were arrested across the state, DG Navdeep Singh and IG Dinesh went to the assembly building and told Raje that they were arresting Principal Secretary, Mines, Ashok Singhvi.

Go ahead if you have enough evidence, Raje is reported to have said, to which Dinesh had assured her

that the 1983-batch IAS officer will be "convicted". Singhvi was arrested within hours, after another tranche of Rs 1.63 crore was seized from other suspects. ACB officials say Dinesh had a major role in the probe among his first visitors from Udaipur at the bureau, where he was once

IAS OFFICER ASHOK SINGHVI (LEFT)



ROHIT JAIN PARAS

RAJE IS EXPECTED TO USE THIS DRIVE TO SELL HER "CLEAN IMAGE" IN THE RUN-UP TO 'RESURGENT RAJASTHAN'. the Superintendent of Police, was a source who reportedly tipped him off about unrest among mine owners and labourers because the department was stopping mining on "frivolous" issues before allowing them to reopen after a few weeks. Allegedly after a bribe exchanged hands.

hrough July and August, say ACB officials, Dinesh raised the heat after learning that six more mines were to be closed, and subsequently permitted to be reopened. The money to be exchanged: a reported Rs 22 crore. Finally, when one bribe deal for a big mine was executed, Singhvi was arrested. His lawyers say there is no case of bribery against Singhvi, as he was neither caught red-handed, nor was money recovered from him. His father A.M. Singhvi refused to comment, telling india today that the case is sub judice.

State Congress chief Sachin Pilot, meanwhile, claimed that the Centre had gathered evidence against Singhvi, leaving Raje with no room to save him.



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A few of the more than 100 cases registered by the Rajasthan ACB since June 19

SATYANARAIAN SINGH Patwari, Sawai Madhopur district

Arrested in July for seeking a bribe to include a name in a case of property transfer after applicant's father's death Rs 2,500*

UMESH BABU PANCHORI Junior clerk, Dholpur

Caught taking a bribe to issue a labour registration diary in September

Rs 6,000

SOHAN LAL Assistant town planner; Jaipur Development Authority

Took money to approve division of a house in Jaipur in July

Rs 50,000

JAYA VERMA In-charge, women's police station, Baran

Taking a bribe in August for not acting against a man in a dowry case registered by his wife

Rs 5,000

MOOL CHAND MALI Assistant in electricity department, Ajmer Caught taking a bribe to restore power connection for agriculture in June **Rs 850**

GOVIND SINGH RAJPUROHIT Food and civil supplies officer, Jalore Booked in July for demanding a bribe to transfer a petrol pump registered in the name of a deceased to his wife

CHANDRAMOHAN PAREEKH

Fire officer, Jaipur

Rs 1.35 lakh

Caught taking a bribe in lieu of issuing a favourable report about a fire in a shop in July **Rs 1,500**

KARNIDAAN CHARAN Nodal officer, Barmer Arrested for demanding a bribe to send to the authorities certificates of payment due to a woman for cooking midday meals Rs 1.500

YASHVIR SINGH Junior engineer, National Seed Corporation, Pratapnagar Arrested for demanding a bribe to pass bills of a warehouse in August

Rs 1 lakh

PADMA DEVI Sarpanch, Mahadevvali village, Bikaner

Arrested in August for demanding a bribe to sign bills for constructing waterbodies **Rs 15,000**

LAL SINGH RANAWAT Commissioner, Sirohi Municipality, and others In July, a case of misuse of office was registered against them Rs 89 lakh estimated loss

KAJOREMAL DOODIA Additional collector, Hanumangarh

ACB finds assets in excess of his known source of income; caught red-handed accepting a bribe

Assets worth Rs 1 crore

*Amounts show alleged bribe

"No IAS officer can indulge in corruption at such a level without support from the top. We have demanded a CBI inquiry into all licences issued for mines under Singhvi," he said.

Rejecting "speculation" that the big fish were arrested at the command of the Centre, Dinesh insisted he developed the case himself.

The problem for the Congress, however, lies in that the party may find it tough to make political capital from this alleged mining and licence racket, as the Raje government was following the Gehlot administration's policy of allotment of mines before the issue snowballed. Singhvi had issued allotment letters to more than 1,400 mines before the Centre issued an ordinance this January, making it mandatory for mines to be auctioned.

Raje is now expected to use this anti-corruption drive to sell her government's "clean image" in the run-up to Resurgent Rajasthan, the international investors' conference

scheduled in November. "We must tell investors that the days of extortion are over and they can do business without fear here," she had reportedly told a senior bureaucrat who had contended that Singhvi's arrest had sent bad signals to investors and left the bureaucracy demoralised.

Incidentally, the big action came at a time when RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat was in the state on a nine-day visit. Raje needs to send the right signals to the RSS, as the Sangh has backed her so far in the Lalit Modi crisis. The chief minister's aides, however, insisted that

> THE PROBLEM FOR THE **CONGRESS IS THAT THE** PARTY MAY FIND IT **DIFFICULT TO MAKE** POLITICAL CAPITAL FROM THIS ALLEGED RACKET.

it was just a part of the ongoing drive and indicated more arrests are in the pipeline in the weeks to come.

But all the reassurances from the Raje camp notwithstanding, given the way successive governments have worked in Jaipur, the current, muchpublicised drive against corruption is making many suspect whether the cases will be taken to a logical conclusion or will be closed sooner or later for political considerations. Over the past decade, both the ACB and the state government have been notorious for closing cases and not granting prosecution quickly, often forcing the Rajasthan High Court to take the ACB to task. If the ongoing drive was a diversionary tactic to take the spotlight off Raje, it was a masterstroke by her state government. If it was not, the opposition will look for the first instance of a let-up and delay in prosecution and raise the decibel level yet again.

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SONS RISE AND SHINE

After criticising Lalu Prasad Yadav and the Congress's Gandhis for years, the BJP and its allies fall into the same trap of dynasty politics in Bihar this time



FAMILY FIRST: LALU PRASAD'S SON TEJASWI (LEFT) AND TEJ PRATAP

- Lalu Prasad's daughter Misa Bharti, who unsuccessfully contested the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, is now a key party strategist
- Sons Tej Pratap and Tejaswi Yadav are contesting from JD(U)-seats. Lalu is already eyeing ministries for both.
- Party MP Jai Prakash Yadav's brother Vijay Prakash Yadav is a candidate

By Amitabh Srivastava

t is not often that Lalu Prasad Yadav gets ruffled. One such moment came for the Rashtriva Janata Dal (RJD) chief in July this year, when a bevy of reporters questioned him about the plans and political future of his sons as the assembly elections neared. "If my sons do not contest elections, what else should they do? Graze buffaloes?" Lalu asked. The "answer" came the following day-in Patna, a top BJP leader quipped, "No, let them contest elections. You have lesser party workers to take care of the cattle."

In an election in any other year, the saffron corner would have lapped up the catchy riposte and turned it into a fitting poll slogan. Perhaps, 'Apne beto ko chunaw ladwayiye aur RJD karyakartao se bhains charwayiye' (translated, minus the rhyme: make your sons fight polls, and let RJD members mind the buffaloes). But heading towards an election where dynasty has stopped being the bugbear of one or two parties, the BJP leader instead prefers to let the remark be anonymous and off public space.

In a state where politics has been a family business ever since the tenure of the first chief minister. Shri Krishna Sinha, the BJP had thus far taken the "party with a difference" stand, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi regularly mocking the UPA as the "maabete ka sarkaar". Any dig at dynasty politics is thus nothing less than a double-edged sword this time. Two top BJP leaders from the state—Buxar MP Ashwini Kumar Choubey and former Union minister and Rajya Sabha member C.P. Thakur—have secured tickets for their sons in the Assembly polls. Choubey's son Arijit Shashwat is contesting from Bhagalpur, a seat Choubey represented several times before moving to Buxar to successfully



fight the Lok Sabha elections in 2014. In fact, sources claim Choubey wanted a ticket for his other son, Aviral Shashwat, from Buxar. The request was turned down. Choubey, however, trashes these allegations: "I did not want a ticket for my son. The party leadership has decided to give him the ticket considering his contributions."

Thakur's son Vivek is the candidate for the Brahampur seat. Vivek was earlier accommodated in the Legislative Council, seen as a move to placate his father after the latter resigned as the state BJP chief in a huff before the 2010 state elections. The BJP has also fielded Sanieev Chourasia, son of senior party leader Ganga Prasad, from Digha seat in Patna.

The empowerment of the inheritors, however, has not gone down well everywhere. A section of local BJP leaders and cadres is known to be piqued with a rebel candidate fielded in Bhagalpur to protest Arijit Shashwat's nomination. On September 23, as Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad and senior leaders Sushil Kumar Modi, C.P. Thakur and

HAM(S)



- Both Jitan Ram Manjhi and son Santosh, fresh in electoral politics, are contesting
- Father-son duo of Bihar party president Shakuni Chowdhary and Rakesh Kumar contesting
- Former Minister Narendra Singh's son Ajay Pratap Singh contesting from Jamui; another son Sumit Singh is contesting from Chakai as an Independent
- Former MP Jagdish Sharma's son Rahul Sharma has also got ticket



Ashwini Choubey accompanied Arijit as he filed his nomination, the rebels had a parallel show when thousands of party cadres accompanied Bhagalpur Mahanagar party president-turnedrebel Vijay Kumar Sahu, who also filed his nomination papers the same day.

So far, only Sasaram MP Chhedi Paswan has questioned this "discrimination". The allegation came after his son Ravi was denied a party ticket. Ravi has since joined the Samajwadi Party and is slated to contest against the official NDA candidate from Chenari. Chhedi Paswan is said to have questioned the denial of ticket to his son, especially when the BJP has fielded sons of Ashwini Choubey and C.P. Thakur. He was also quoted by a section of the local media on September 28, as having expressed his displeasure over the move.

Paswan has since gone incommunicado, and the person answering his phone told india today that he does not want to speak to the media. Repeated calls and SMSes to BJP state chief Mangal Pandev on September 29 did not elicit a response either. Leader of



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Opposition Nand Kishore Yadav tells INDIA TODAY that the BJP does not practice dynastic politics. "We have given tickets to party workers, and not because they are sons of our leaders. The fact that some leaders have complained over this very fact proves that we have not given tickets due to family connections," he says.

wo NDA allies. Ram Vilas Paswan's Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) and Jitan Ram Manjhi's Hindustani Awam Morcha-Secular (HAM-S), are more than equal to the dynasty task. Of the 21 seats allocated to Manjhi's party, at least five have been earmarked for the father-son duo. Besides Manjhi, who is contesting two seats, and his son Santosh, state HAM(S) President Shakuni Chowdhary and his son Rakesh Kumar are contesting from Tarapur and Khagaria, respectively. The new party has also fielded former state minister Narendra Singh's son Ajay Pratap and Jagdish Sharma's son Rahul.

The most brazen display of family politics is seen in the LJP, which has given tickets to Paswan's brother Pashupati Nath Paras, nephew Prince Raj, and daughter-in-law Sarita. The party has also fielded Yusuf, son of Khagariya MP Mehboob Ali Qaiser, from Simri Bakhtiarpur and MP Surajbhan Singh's brother Kanhaiya Singh from Mokama. In 2014, of the six Lok Sabha seats the LJP won. three remained in the family: that of Paswan, son Chirag and younger brother Ram Chandra. Chirag is now the chairman of LJP's parliamentary board and is said to have decided the ticket distribution exercise.

Three-time chief minister Jagannath Mishra's son Nitish, originally a HAM(S) nominee, has been fielded on a BJP ticket under an internal arrangement between the parties.

As for the RJD, there was a time it was known as the party of S-1, S-2—or that of Sadhu and Subhas, Lalu's infamous brothers-in-law. Today it is referred to as T-1, T-2—Tej Pratap and Tejaswi, the former chief minister's sons who are contesting from Mahua and Raghopur, respectively. Both seats

LJP



- Union minister Ram Vilas Paswan, son Chirag and brother Ram Chandra are Lok Sabha MPs
- In Assembly, Paswan's brother Pashupati Nath Paras and Ram Chandra's son Prince Raj have been given tickets
- Also contesting: MP Mehboob Ali Qaiser's son Mohd Yusuf Khan
- Ram Chandra Paswan's daughterin-law Sarita Paswan
- MP Surajbhan Singh's brother Kanhaiya Singh

SONU KISHAN



PRINCE RAJ PASWAN

were won by JD(U) in 2010, with Rabri Devi losing from Raghopur, the constituency from where Lalu formally launched his election campaign with a public meeting on September 27. With Rabri Devi and daughter Misa Bharti biting the dust last summer, Lalu is leaving no stone unturned to ensure a smooth run for Tejaswi and Tej Pratap. Madhepura MP Pappu Yadav, once a close Lalu aide who later formed his own party after the RJD expelled him, has criticised Lalu for giving family precedence over party. But his critics point out that the RJD chief has done it for nearly 20 years now-he had pitchforked Rabri Devi to the chief minister's chair when he was jailed in a fodder scam case in July 1997.

Bihar has had a long tradition of doting politicians who empowered their children. Shri Krishna Singh, the first chief minister, had recommended Cabinet colleague A.N. Sinha's son S.N. Sinha as a member of the provisional parliament in 1950. Popularly known as "chhote saheb", Sinha junior represented south Bihar's Aurangabad Lok Sabha seat nine times and eventually became the chief minister in March 1989. He was followed by Lalu Prasad the next year, who, with time, turned out to be another dynast.

Shri Krishna Singh's brother Bandi Shankar was a cabinet minister in the 1980s; S.N. Sinha's wife Kishori Sinha and daughter-in-law Shyama Sinha both represented the Vaishali Lok Sabha seat in the 1980s. His son, Nikhil Kumar, a former Delhi Police commissioner and a third-generation politician, is also a former Kerala governor.

Suresh Ram, late Congress veteran Jagjivan Ram's son, was a cabinet minister in 1969. His daughter Meira Kumar was the Lok Sabha Speaker during UPA 2.

But what is a cause for worry in this family-first politics of Bihar is the silence of the likes of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and the BJP's Sushil Modi, his deputy CM not long ago. The two are in a minuscule group of top Bihar leaders who have not involved family members in politics. Nitish is perhaps also the only politician in the state who had declared a war against family politics. That was 2009, when, immediately after an unprecedented victory in the parliamentary polls, Nitish refused ticket requests from JD(U) MPs who wanted to field family members in the September 2009 Assembly by-elections. As the dynasty war heats up, JD(U) General Secretary K.C. Tyagi takes a pot shot at the prime rival. Calling Nitish Kumar "a shining example of how a leader should be", he says, "The BJP used to attack the Congress and Laluji over this but look at them now. They have no regard for democratic values."

Brave words, but not something either Nitish or his party leaders can say out loud in these elections.

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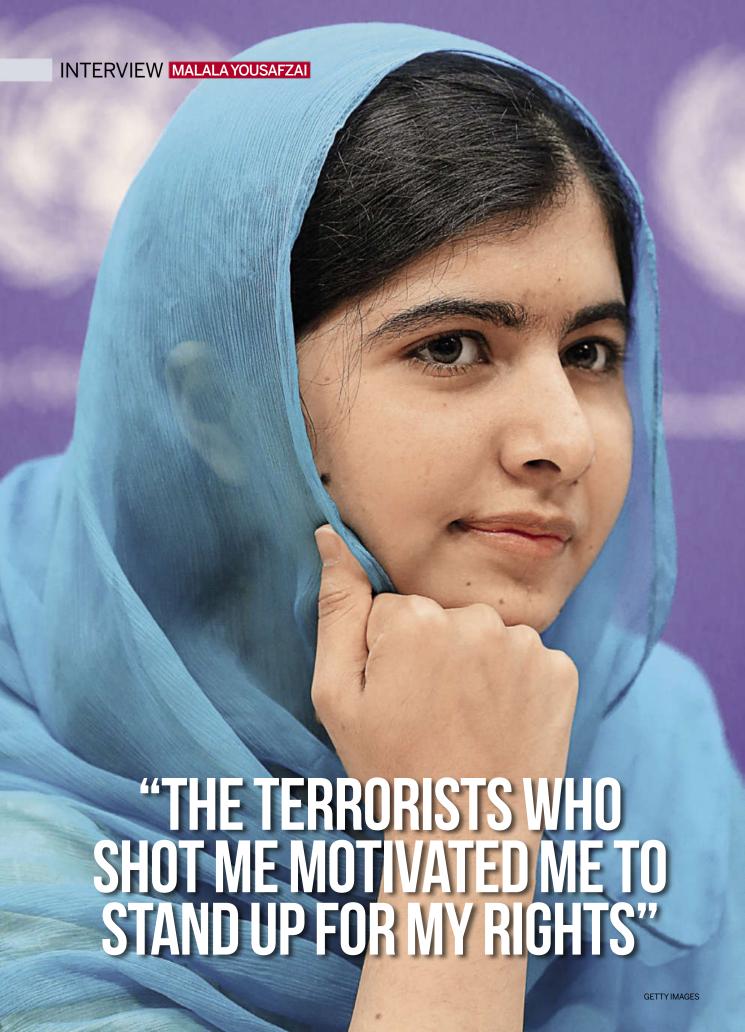








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She is barely 18 but Malala Yousafzai has already encountered fierce challenges as an education activist—from drawing global attention to the Taliban's no-educationfor-girls diktat through her blog to taking a bullet in the head for saying every girl must go to school. Her inspiring story of grit and courage has now been made into a documentary He Named Me Malala. The Pakistani teenager who now lives in England talks about her journey so far in an interview to India Today TV Consulting Editor Rajdeep Sardesai. Excerpts:

Q. A Nobel Prize at 17 and now a major film being made on your life by the time you are 18, you must be feeling like a superstar.

A. Well, I am just a normal girl and I am doing what is the responsibility of all of us, which is to stand for what is right in your society and to stand against injustices. I cannot tolerate women being denied the right to have an identity

and girls being denied the right to education. That is what I am standing for and I think this is the right thing we all should do.

Q. Where does this self-confidence come from? You seem to be not just 18 but well beyond your years.

A. When you believe in yourself and have a strong belief in what you are saying, then it comes automatically.

Q. Was it that fateful day in October 2012 that changed your life, that gave you more courage and bravery?

A. When I was targeted, I was a little afraid. But I realised on that day no power in the world can stop my fight for education. This fight for education will continue.

Q. In the documentary film He Named Me Malala, you say that Taliban is not about Islam but about grabbing power. But it is power which flows from the

barrel of the gun. Can this power be fought against?

A. In order to fight the power of extremism, this power of terrorism, we have to empower our young generation through education. The weapons that we need are our books and pens and our voice, that is the most important thing. There is no investment done in education, which is needed right now. We need our leaders to invest more in education, to empower the future generation against

Q. Taliban is targeting children now. You know what happened in Peshawar. Everyone can't become Malala.

A. It is a matter of horror and sadness that children have been targeted. This is unimaginable. It is sad that politicians grieve for a few days but do nothing. We hope something is done. Hope safety is ensured for everyone.

Q. I don't see any anger and bitterness in you against those who tried to kill you. You smile when you are asked about that fateful day in 2012. Why?

Don't you have a sense of anger?

A. When I think about others, one thing is very important. If I expect others to treat me with fairness, kindness and forgiveness and justice, I want to treat people with the same feeling. If I expect a terrorist not to shoot, I feel I should also believe in forgiveness.

Q. Your life has changed since 2012. What has been the most difficult thing for you to adjust to in these last three years?

A. Living in the UK. It is a totally different country and culture and, specially for my mother, it was very difficult to adjust. Now after three years, we have adjusted quite well.

O. Would you like to go to Pakistan again?

A. Inshallah, that is my wish. I want to go to Pakistan and serve the people of my country. I started my campaign for education from Swat. The terrorists who stopped me from getting education motivated me to stand up for my rights. I will continue my campaign there.

Q. Your father is a real inspiration for you. The film is basically about your relationship with your father. Is he your driving force, your inspiration, your guru?

A. Well, he is my inspiration and also my mother. She is the one who encouraged both of us. She strongly believes in telling the truth and it is her strong belief that you should say what is right and deny all injustices. My father has so much energy. He is so passionate and it was his struggle for women's rights and education that motivated me.

Q. But there are people who say that Malala says what the West, America, tells her. Malala does not raise issues of Pakistanis. How do you react to that?

A. Pakistan is my nation and people there love me. Some people criticise me, but my struggle for education is

not Western or Eastern. It is a human right which cannot be ignored.

Q. Do you want to come to India and inspire young Indian girls?

A. I am very surprised and happy that people in India love me a lot. People in India love me, respect me. They don't care about my religion or where I belong to. People stand with me knowing that I am doing good work. This is what is good about India and I would love to visit India. I would love to see Delhi, Mumbai and other places.

Q. I have heard that during India-Pakistan matches, you support Pakistan fully.

A. Yes, I want India and Pakistan to have good relations always but in cricket, I always want Pakistan to win.

Q. One day, like Benazir Bhutto, you want to be the prime minister of Pakistan?

A. Hopefully, if people vote for me. But my dream is to help children get education.

"I WANT TO GO TO PAKISTAN AND SERVE THE PEOPLE OF MY COUNTRY... PEOPLE THERE LOVE ME."



"MY STRUGGLE FOR **EDUCATION IS NOT WESTERN OR EASTERN. IT** IS A HUMAN RIGHT WHICH **CANNOT BE IGNORED.**"

THE RETURN OF A SUITABLE POET

Vikram Seth's first volume of verse in 15 years is a requiem not merely to summer, but to the growing pains of his increasingly political and self-critical metre

By Gayatri Jayaraman

t 8 a.m. in Portland, Oregon, the day is still filtering through a darkened study on the ground floor of a wooden-floored house, and as its owners are yet to stir, its jetlagged houseguest, one of an Indo-American wedding party, finds an epithalamium—a verse of praise written for a bride and groom—forming in his mind. So you wait, and call back, bracketing the beginning and the end of the birthing of his poem from conception. Bearing witness, long distance as that may be, to a creation and a birth pang, a contraction and its *petit mort*, poetry, in that half hour or so, is the only introduction to Vikram Seth you will ever really need. He wonders

if it will be a good poem, and you wonder if it is even possible for Seth to ever have written a bad one and in the mutual wonderment, it is ascertained that indeed, he has. Put them in a file to go back to them later, you presume. "Put them in a file and don't go back to them later," he assures you. And it is as though his forthcoming volume of poetry, the first in 15 years, *Summer Requiem*, were an ode not only to those rites of passage that fill the seasons of his years, but also of the poetry; the things, as such, that Seth has painstakingly filed away. "If you know a poem is not going anywhere, then other things take over," he says of his poetry, as much as of life. There are some poems in the file, Seth admits that he doesn't even understand today.

But resonance is an emotional charge, and this is true, points out Seth, of the works of other poets and novelists. "We write those works in a particular time, and circumstances allow you to see its implications". So if Summer Requiem seems horribly despondent, you must remember that its bleakness is several intervals of it come together.

LIFE, SET

COMPLE

THERE IS IN ADDING

Seth remains one of the few contemporary poets who has crossed the barrier to be known as much, if not more, for his prose. *A Suitable Girl*, the sequel to his *A Suitable Boy*, stirred much controversy when Penguin, the original publishers, tired of waiting for the manuscript, termi-



Summer Requiem by Vikram Seth Aleph Pages 72 Price 399

nated the contract paving way for Orion Publishers to step in. The yet-to-be-published novel still stirs much curiosity. "The popular engagement is definitely more with the prose than with poetry and it's kind of natural because more people gravitate towards prose and non-fiction than poetry," Seth says, admitting he's not sure why, given that all his prose works have a dedication often in the Onegin stanza. "I've only ever written three novels: Golden Gate, which is anyway poetry, A Suitable Boy and An Equal Music, which in fact has large chunks of it in blank verse. And they are such different works that at various times, I feel closer to one or the other and there is no explanation for any of it. To try to find a reason why one likes something is to almost

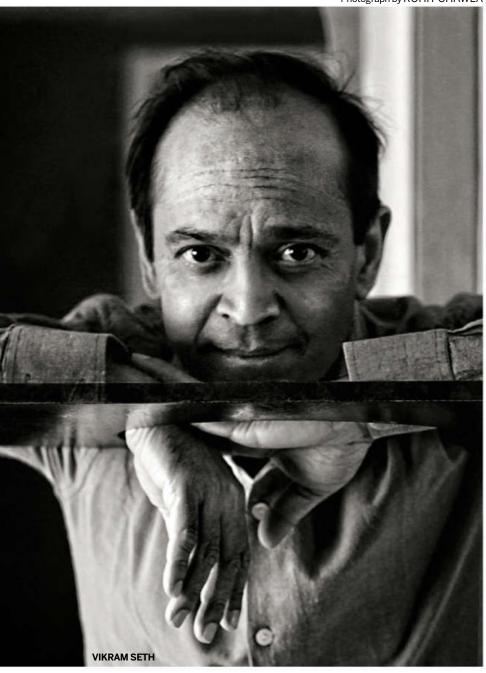
perplex oneself further."

For the reader, Seth, who breaks into Hindi mid-sentence with the ease of one who is never really quite as away as you think he is, believes he offers a mutability: the "chalo dekhte hain, shayari mein bhi kya likha hai (let us see, what kind of poetry has he written)" even if you are not primed to read poetry. But more than that, Seth says, is the effort he takes to write clearly. "Quite a lot of modern poems, even to poets, are not very comprehensible. I can't always understand what they are about," he says candidly. "The reason I write poetry is if something moves me or affects me, amuses me or interests me, I want to communicate that, not in a very abstruse manner if I can avoid it, but as clearly as possible."

As with any form of writing, the simpler Seth's work appears to be, the more highly structured it is and more effort it is likely to have consumed. As much as Seth's poetry builds with the iambic pentameter, exceptions to his own rule exist in his repertoire. For instance, 'And Some Have Madness Thrust Upon Them', in Seth's own words, has "neither rhyme nor reason". Yet the formal rhyme and metre are some things Seth enjoys playing with in an age when the free or blank verse is preferred and structural integrity of forms like couplets are often treated as a regressive classicism.

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THERE IS NO POINT IN
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BY NOT PARING
THINGS DOWN
TO WHAT THEIR
ESSENTIALS ARE.

Photograph by ROHIT CHAWLA



Seth's writing, including much of Summer Requiem, often challenges these, the more hipster needs of contemporary poetry and its convoluted cryptic mysticisms.

Life, Seth believes, is complex enough, as are one's feelings, and there is no point in adding an extra layer of obscurity by not paring things down to what their essentials are. "But I'm not saying I don't enjoy poems which I don't completely understand. Take (T.S. Eliot's) The Wasteland; it's not a very obvious poem in any way and it can be seen as being obscure. But it is also indubitably a great poem and a resonant poem. Though I have general tenets of what I

believe, fact is, if I like something, then I like it even if it goes against my philosophy and theory of how poetry should be constructed," he says.

As for rhyme, not all poetic traditions have rhyme but all poetic traditions have metre, some of it seeping successfully into popular song, Seth points out. "You will often find that modern poetry, which has neither rhyme nor metre, are particularly considered worth bothering with. It is considered pedantic, academic or even reactionary if you can believe that," he says, incredulous. "Quite often, rhyme and metre suggests things that you might normally have thought of yourself without it." The thing rhyme must not do, he says, is to sound gimmicky and artificial and forced. The thing that poetic sentence structure should not be is full of inversions and entanglementsin fact, these are things that you should not expect to find even in good prose. "Rhyme works as a suggestive mechanism and that will make you remember a good poem when you have need of it: When you need consolation, or inspiration or amusement, it is actually quite an effective mechanism."

It is in a strangely paradoxical way, the age of poetry, with clubs, open mics, publishing and self publishing avenues from traditional print and new digital mediums opening up the world to young poets everywhere. Bad poetry, as much as good, proliferates. "Always judge a poet by his best work and I think this is also true of the poets of the past. William Wordsworth wrote wonderful poetry but he also wrote a lot of non-

sense and that is true of everyone. So even if you are a beginner poet, you should obviously try to hone your poetry as much as possible and forget that there are lots of dossiers lying about with awful stuff. Quite a lot of my poetry often makes me cringe, luckily not too much of it has been published."

For Seth, to be published is no longer the urge it was when he was young and keen to make his way in the literary world. He attributes the lack of that ambition in part to laziness, the tedium of the commercial process of publishing and publicising, and in part to the feeling of being

LEISURE BOOKS

RHYME IN SEASON

This garden was built for peace. But every day Somewhere a lawnmower is grumbling busily, Building chance events into a philosophy, 'Gather and scatter, gather and scatter.'
I have so carefully mapped the corners of my mind That I am forever waking in a lost country. Everything learnt has been trivial: on the evening road I fumble to read the signpost with my fingers Which claw so fiercely they're no use at all.

—Summer Requiem

At three the late light glides across The last gold leaves on the black ground. The snow is near, as is my loss: The peaceful love I've never found.

Outside the great world's gifts and harms There must be somewhere I can go To rest within a lover's arms, At ease with the impending snow.

-Late Light

I find I simply can't get out of bed. I shiver and procrastinate and stare. I'll press the reset button in my head.

I hate my work but I am in the red. I'd quit it all if I could live on air. I find I simply can't get out of bed.

—Can't

left bereft of its emotional charge inherent in the need to write once the poem has been gotten out of the way. Summer Requiem is in that sense a gathering of poems he set aside across 15 years, the poem's intimately personal work for its writer done. It also contains the rare admission, sometimes self-deprecatingly defeatist, that he just can't go on. Perhaps, says Seth, that was why he took so long to decide to publish, and only later realised that every writer does go through those dark times. "I don't have a romantic notion of unhappiness; it is just that I, like everyone else, from time to time, too go through those periods of darkness," he says, candidly. The realisation that his poem then goes into a vacuum, leaving no one else with any value from it, is what eventually pushes Seth to pull poems out of folders and files and to rely on what he calls his 'inner bullshit detector' to sift between what is good and what is not. "The poems I write now are less likely to fall below my own standard as the ones I wrote as an undergraduate or much younger." He recognises what he dubs a selfish attitude, knowing that works such as 'All You Who Sleep Tonight'

clearly deeply impact many. "If the Muse has given you a poem, it is not only for yourself".

Within the lines of Summer Requiem then are not only Seth's personal stolen-away emotional charges but also his battles to understand his own creative needs and drives. In the poems that are silent here, absent from this collection equally, like pauses in a musical composition, the notes speak. (His signature nods in this volume are to Hans Holbein the Younger's art, Alexander Pope's couplets, to Dylan Thomas's Do not go gentle into that good night, his translations of Italian sonneteer Giacomo Leopardi—influences he introduces into the poems lightly.) Like all poets, Seth says, he owes so much to the poets who have gone before, one doesn't want to make it too obvious or make it so referential that one can't understand it without a degree in English Literature. Sometimes the references are from his private repertoire of pleasure. But sometimes it is just there, and realised as a reference much later. In using them this way, Seth weaves himself into an intergalactic connectedness of a pantheon of great poets. With this collection, again, Seth places himself in a context of whom he is writing for and what he is writing with.

he growth for Seth in the work is a rising edge. The work has a dark undertone to it. His metaphors, while largely remaining pastoral, birds and flowers dotting the seasons and giving away his various locations, burst through every now and then, acquiring a violent tinge: "Our venom from an absent spine" in 'The Halfway Line' and "I never look for things to say./They find me and they crush my jaw." in 'Things to Say' are unusual first turns of phrase for a poet known for his gentle forays into a romantic bleakness. While he has addressed politics per se before, in the assassination of South African anti-apartheid leader Steve Biko, or on the Tiananmen Square massacre, his imagery has always held a gentleness. For the first time, an imagery of the violence of political scheming tinges his words. "It is a reference to people who would do absolutely anything to get to that quorum for power made apparent in those metaphors," says Seth, echoing Robert Frost and a sensibility that seeps in where as you grow older, the smallest thing can perturb you while at other times you remain pragmatic in the face of all shocks. "This is just the imagery of an ordinary man about the world upset about what people of power do to people who are powerless," he says.

A Suitable Girl, Seth assures you, is underway and in the writing, but if this work is any indicator of a changed sensibility, a wakening up to a changed world around him, it is likely that it will carry a slightly edgier tone than A Suitable Boy. Summer Requiem thus may not be his most primal work, but it is a watershed, for all that it does not say, as much as all that it does. The requiem is sung for the poet who has realised the world no longer affords him the luxury of keeping his romanticism.

Follow the writer on Twitter @Gayatri J

THE LAST STAND

In a new collection of essays, Romila Thapar argues that public intellectuals must speak out

By Kaveree Bamzai



The Public Intellectual in India by Romila Thapar with Sundar Sarukkai, Dhruv Raina, Peter Ronald deSouza.

Neeladri Bhattacharya

and Jawed Nagvi Aleph Pages 204 Price 449

Let not people say no one spoke up, says Romila Thapar, at 83, one of the leading lights of the intellectual resistance against the cultural cleansing project. "Let it go on record that there were people with other views," she says on the eve of the release of a new book of essays: The Public Intellectual in India. The collection, which also features essays by other scholars such as Neeladri Bhattacharya and Dhruv Raina, says a society needs its public intellectuals, people who can ask the right questions at relevant moments.

No moment is as relevant as now, when the direction in which Indian society has evolved so far is being altered.

Thapar underlines three problems currently: a

silent acquiescing in the politicising of religion, an inability to publicly debate liberal views; and a hesitation in accepting a reasoned understanding of ourselves rather than mythologising who we are.

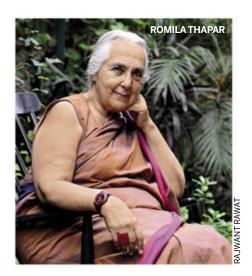
Almost clinically, she destroys the very edifice on which Hindutva is built, reminding us that it is part of a colonial construction of who and what we are. The scrambling together of religious sects into monolithic Hinduism and monolithic Islam and the confrontation of these two was a colonial invention, she writes, pointing out that we have not understood the intensity of colonial disjuncture. She makes another important point: that Hinduism is not the same as Hindutya. Hinduism, she writes, is a mosaic of belief systems, some linked, some not. Hindutva has the characteristics of a sect that reformulates selected beliefs to create a socio political organisation with an attempt at ideological coherence. And here, she points out, they have borrowed from another colonial, Macaulay's advice to control what is taught.

The Hindu nationalism agenda, dating back to the 1930s, was incomplete last time, she points out in an interview at her beautiful book-laden home in south Delhi. "This time they're back with such a seemingly big mandate, it would be regarded as a now or never situation for them." So institutions are being dismantled systematically by arguing against their activities; administrators are being changed at will; a new university act proposes tight Central control over syllabus and recruitment; books are being banned, clothing is being controlled, what you eat is being regulated; and there are nasty cracks against minorities. "When such attitudes prevail, it emboldens those who think they can take law into their own hands," argues Thapar. "Three people have been assassinated," she says angrily, "and police are in a position to do nothing? I am not convinced about the difficulties of finding the killers."

And as they erase the legacy of Indian democracy, they appropriate ever newer icons to concoct a new shared

> history where our past greatness, a 19th century obsession, becomes appealing to the young in the face of the West's technological advance. So whether it is the Pythagoras theorem or the invention of stem cell, India becomes the scientific iagatauru. Thapar is open to the idea of government funding professional research into ancient texts to analyse the origins of scientific knowledge but not the dissemination of irresponsible claims.

> "The occasional voice carries less weight. There has to be a critical mass assessing government in the social and visual media. This is obvious to those with strong ideological positions who organise such a presence. It is too much to expect people who value their freedom, and especially the young, not to object to its repeated curtailment in various ways. This is where the projection of opinion and an awareness of its context becomes important. The space for argument must be kept alive," she says, and not only in TV debates in which six people shout at each other every night. Dissent cannot exist without debate, and what is democracy without that?



"No society that claims to be a democracy can base itself on a majority and minorities organised on religious lines, and still make that claim.'

"Nationalism projected a shared history and because this did not suit the Hindutva ideology, the latter had to produce an alternate history, and in the process eliminate or reformulate what was not in agreement with Hindutva."

NEIGHBOURS FROM HELL

People living next-door have an enormous power to irritate you, a reason why our courts are filling up with neighbours at odds

By Damayanti Datta

id you know that you can be taken to court for laughing out loud under someone's window? A laughter club had to zip up in Mumbai. Or that, if you are a bachelor, you may be asked to pay a fine by your neighbours, apart from being debarred from using the lift? Yes, that's what has happened in a Bengaluru housing society. Are you getting obscene crank calls in the middle of the night? It may just be the neighbour you shooed out from your parking space the other day. A Chandigarh man has been charged with 'outraging the modesty of a woman' for this. And you really should think twice before scolding noisy children in your apartment. You may just land up in police net.

WANTED SMART CITIZENS

September 28 is celebrated as 'Good Neighbour Day' in many countries across the world. India desperately needs a day like that. For horror stories about neighbours from hell are being reported from across the country. Consider the headlines: somewhere in Nashik, a man refuses to clean up his poultry shop. His neighbours, tormented by flies and stench, have lodged a complaint with the consumer court; In tony Navrangpura of Ahmedabad, residents are lodging complaints against a family which routinely throws soiled trash on the pavement; In Shalimar Garden, Ghaziabad, effort is on to bring to book a neighbour who has

made it difficult for people to walk or drive through the area by dumping broken tiles and concrete. In Chachal, Guwahati, a man has usurped a part of a street, claiming it to be his property. In Begumpet, Hyderabad, someone is putting up speed breakers, to everyone's alarm.

Are they the smart citizens who will inhabit Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Rs 48,000 crore Smart Cities project? When the PM flagged off the project in June with an uplifting comment, "The decision to make cities smart will be taken not by governments but by the people," we the people of India cheered loud and long at all the promising "ly"-words-ecologically, technologically, financially, meticulously-that would transform India's messy urban landscape into "cities of the future". By September 3. about 98 cities were chosen to become 'smart' at Rs 2 crore each through a nationwide competition. As Union Urban Development Minister M. Venkaiah Naidu said, "The clock has begun to tick." But for the dream to manifest, India will have to overcome one fundamental problem: how to create smart citizens, who will collude and not collide.

NEW URBAN MODERNITY

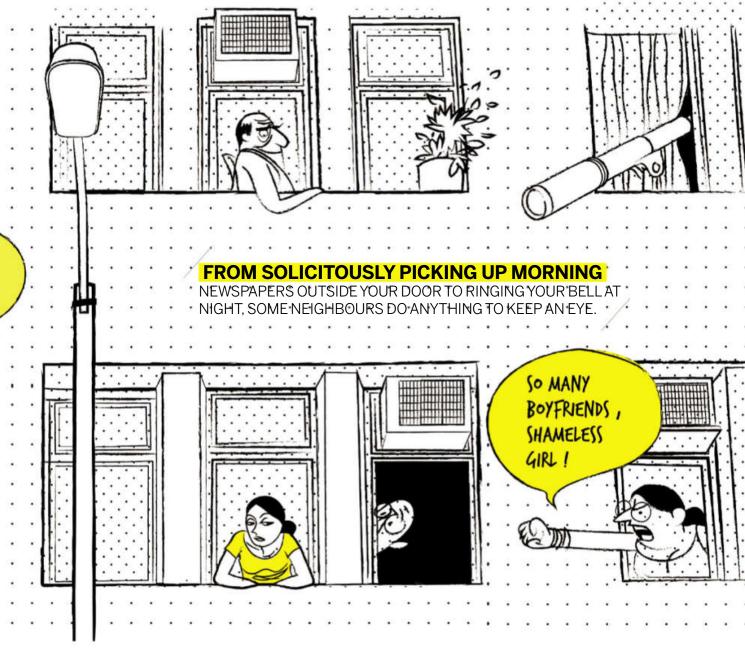
Let's face it: urban geography is experiencing a new birth in India. More and more people now live in cities and towns. If in 1951, about 17.3 per cent of the population was urban, it is 32 per cent now. According to the United Nations Department of



Illustrations by SAURABH SINGH

Economic and Social Affairs, India is one of the world's largest urban growth hubs. In this thronging mass of humanity, life is vertical and compressed: 32,400 people per sq km in Mumbai, 26,903 in Chennai, 19,698 in Delhi and 12,200 in Kolkata. Piled on top of each other in multi-storied buildings, jammed together in closely packed concrete rows, spilling out of gated communities, neighbours are stepping on each other's toes, getting on each other's nerves and derailing each other's projects, even when one gains no obvious benefit and may well pay a cost.

To A.G. Krishna Menon, architect, urban planner and conservation consultant, "people are living closer to one another than ever before,



recreation areas are overcrowded. while infrastructure and amenities have not kept pace". This is leading to a "friction of space": "With rising land value and property prices in our urban hubs, people want to make the most of every square inch they possess." Any infarction into 'my space' can make one even spill blood, he explains. "It's a very serious issue," adds Gautam Bhatia, architect, artist, and writer. "Serious architectural divisions are taking place in most urban neighbourhoods," he says. "The neighbourhood quadrangles are giving way to gated communities, where neighbours do not need to speak to each other, nor build social lives around them. Your computer and mobile phone can navigate your

life, while your car can take you to any part of the town for a movie or a Greek restaurant." The whole neighbourly plot seems to hinge today on rising urban stress, points out Dr Jai Ranjan Ram, consultant psychiatrist with Apollo Gleneagles Hospital, Kolkata: rage attacks, impulsivity and the need to show 'I'm the boss', even if one wastes one's own time, too. "Being civil is almost a sign of weakness now, he says. "If a neighbour complains about noise from your flat, you make more noise, just to annoy him or her," he says. To all of them, migration is a big issue: most big cities are filling up with migrants, who have little rootedness, affinity or sense of identity with their environment or the people they live with.

ALL SHAPES AND SIZES

You can't choose who lives next to you. And neighbours come in all shapes and sizes, with enormous power to irritate you. From all-night music parties to parking space hogging, an crying babies to barking dogs, noisy constructions to chucking garbageminor nuisances escalate into warlike proportions far too often, and often with disastrous consequences. That's not all: your friendly neighbourhood 'uncle' may even be a hardcore criminal, according to the National Crime Records Bureau: 34.7 per cent rapists happen to be neighbours and prime suspects in 13.2 per cent cyber crime are again neighbours. No wonder, India's courts are replete with neighbour-to-neighbour conflicts. You can

SOCIETY NEIGHBOURS

gnash your teeth, yell and tell, spend sleepless nights, settle scores, move out or go to courts. But it makes sense to make an effort and get along with them. Here are issues, big and small, taken from consumer files and court diaries, to keep in mind in case you meet your "neighbour from hell".

"I can't sleep."

The biggest complaint people have against their neighbours is noise. The Delhi High Court recently hauled up an East Delhi housing society. "I and my family had sleepless nights whenever there's a function in the community hall," says Ankur Mutreja, a lawyer who filed the case. "Caterers clean utensils through the night. The noise is unbearable." Neighbourhood killjoys? Think again. "Anxiety related to noise and lost sleep can mean hefty doctor's bills," says Dr Anoop Misra, head of metabolic disorders at Fortis Hospital in Delhi, "It can raise heart attack risk and seriously affect health of the elderly, children and pregnant women."

"Your pet is a pest."

Consumer courts are replete with complaints about "barking, howling and whining of dog" and of neighbours not doing anything about it. Consider a Trichy resident's pet peeve: "My neighbour's dog barks, whines and howls incessantly during the day and sometimes at night because it's not properly cared for. We have spoken to them thrice but they don't care. The noise is so loud and piercing that we cannot talk, watch TV, sleep or do anything." It's a typical neighbourly issue that often necessitates intervention by The Plants and Animals Welfare Society (PAWS). "We get a lot of these complaints," says Nilesh Bhanage, founder of PAWS. "Housing society members get together and pass arbitrary bylaws on pets. Every week I send legal notices to some society or the other."

"Get off my parking lot."

With one parking spot for every 120 vehicles, fights over parking lots are typical to Mumbai. A brawl over a parking slot last year turned ugly with two brothers losing their lives in Saki Naka, Mumbai. Neighbours came

to the rescue when brothers Ashish Singh, 27, and Avneesh, 26, came to blows with the accused. Rakesh Sharma, 33, at 10.45 p.m. in a building society on Asalfa Link Road. But it didn't end there. A week later, Sharma and his gang attacked the two with choppers and sickles, and killed them. "Neighbours and housing societies clash regularly over parking rights," says Wahid Ahmed, a real estate agent with Spaces Property Consultants in Juhu. "As flat-owners fight with each other, housing societies take advantage by asking for as much as Rs 1 lakh or more for one."

"I'm invading your space."

There are neighbours who delight in illegal construction. That was the bone of contention between Falaknoor Lakdawalla, 52, and Aijaz Shaikh, 34, both third-floor residents of two buildings separated by a narrow gully on Masjid Street in south Mumbai. With Shaikh turning his attic into a room by encroaching on the adjacent open space, Lakdawalla lost light, ventilation, privacy and safety. When the municipality issued a demolition notice in May 2011, Shaikh moved

court. But Bombay High Court upheld Lakdawalla's rights: "Your neighbour can have a say if you put up an illegal construction."

"You are being watched."

When Mugdha Joshi, 34, moved into a flat in a quiet suburb of Delhi, she saw the curtains twitch in the flat next door. Initially her neighbour, a motherly homemaker, made the single working woman feel safe and welcome. But it soon became obvious that she was keeping an eye on Joshi: from solicitously picking up morning newspapers outside her door to ringing her bell at night to find out how she was doing. Soon she started keeping her front door ajar. Joshi responded by distancing herself. The silent falling out liberated her but made her neighbour bitter, who started complaining to the housing society about every bit of "noise" every day. Joshi is looking to move to friendlier climes.

"You don't know but I use your wi-fi too."

There are neighbours who can blithely steal your wi-fi connectivity and push up your monthly bill. "I have been

CONSUMER COURTS ARE REPLETE WITH

COMPLAINTS ABOUT BARKING, HOWLING AND WHINING OF PETS AND OF NEIGHBOURS NOT DOING ANYTHING ABOUT IT.





using my neighbour's unsecured wi-fi on my laptop for downloads and they got excess bill," wrote one such thief to India Broadband forum in July last year. "Now they have complained for the excessive billing. Will the BSNL people know what I have done? Can BSNL find out the pages I browsed?" In response, the broadband agony aunt suggested that he should ask his neighbours to choose an unlimited plan. So secure your wi-fi and change the password regularly. If what your neighbour is doing is illegal, you could be in trouble.

"Beware, I am a sexual predator."

This is the last thing you expect from a neighbour, but it's more common than you imagine. In August, a 14-yearold hanged herself after a neighbour molested and attempted to rape her, in Kota, Rajasthan. Although, she was rescued by other neighbours, she took out her anger on herself—leaving a suicide note behind. Sounds extreme? Not really. In 2006, in Kolkata, a few dozen residents in an apartment in not-so-upmarket Lake Town had barged into the flat of a new occupant, a single woman. She was rescued by the guard but their excuse was inexcusable: she was "too fast" for the neighbourhood.

"I'll kill you."

Can neighbours kill? In May this year, 22-year-old Suyash Dixit of Pune got a life-term for killing his neighbour Shashikant Kore, 39, because he had objected to youngsters playing cricket on the premises of their housing society in Yerawada. Suyash's parents were also sentenced to a year's rigorous imprisonment for beating up Kore. The two families had been fighting for some time over the same issue. The ongoing verbal tussle turned fatal one day as the Dixits first beat up and then stabbed Kore to death. It's not a one-off. In March, a court sentenced a Mumbai mother to life-term for killing the four-year-old daughter of her neighbour for fighting with her children.

So beware, keep calm and try to 'love thy neighbour'. If you absolutely can't, just grit your teeth, ignore and carry on.

Follow the writer on Twitter @dattadamayanti

THE PRODIGAL CHEFS

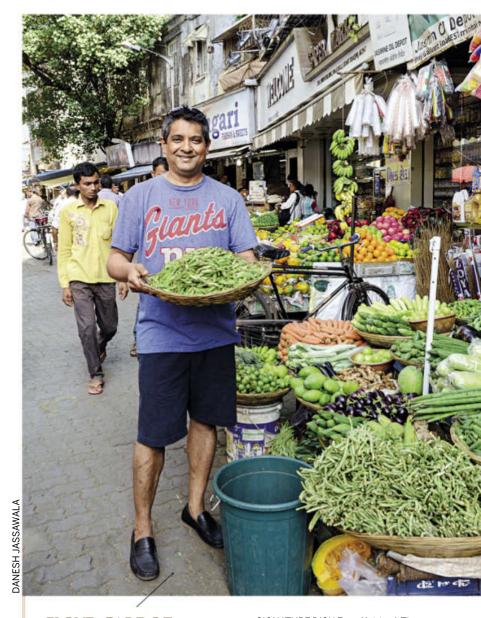
By Gayatri Jayaraman and Moeena Halim

he battle for gastronomical India is on. New Delhi may have bagged British celebrity chef Jamie Oliver's high-street brand Italian and his Pizzeria and Goa gains former MasterChef Australia contestant Sarah Todd, but Mumbai is where culinary pan is truly sizzling. In 2015 alone, three of India's greatest chef hats overseas open their standalones in the island city, each promising to break away from their signature styles. Add to them Britain-based Manoj Vasaikar of Veeraswamy and Chutney Mary, who brought in Mirchi & Mime in May this year, and Stephen Gomes of Moksh, Wales, who plans to launch Mad Hatter soon.

What these chefs have been homing in on is a Make-in-India mood, spilling over beyond manufacturing and industry into a newfound pride in local ingredients, vegetables, fruit, culture, context, and talent. It's suddenly cool to be Indian the world over and it's being driven by an audience that's willing and able to experiment courtesy disposable incomes.

Michelin-starred chef Atul Kochhar of London's Benares restaurant fame says that five years ago, what he sees in India today would not have been possible. But it's more than the maturing of a nation now primed to meet itself, it's also been a decade in which our finest exports in the food industry had sown their wild oats. They're now bringing it home. For Top Chef Floyd Cardoz, who dished out some of New York's finest French-inspired cuisine at The North End Grill, it was about making and backing food that was real to him and closer to home. For S. Pellegrino winner Gaggan Anand, who found himself in Thailand, it's about bringing the trophy home to rest it on the Indian mantelpiece.

It's also the fruition of a gestation period in breaking into Indian palates



FLOYD CARDOZ 54 Of North End Grill New York fam

Of North End Grill, New York fame

RESTAURANTS Mentors; also backs Sameer Seth and Yash Bhanage's The Bombay Canteen LOCATION Kamala Mills, Mumbai VIBE Mumbai casual CONCEPT Quintessential Mumbai food, great eats from across the city and its influencers SIGNATURE DISH Eggs Kejriwal, Tingmo bread (Tibetan), arbi tuk (Sindhi) WHY INDIA NOW "Whatever restaurant I opened had to be a celebration of Indian cuisine and ingredients, something I felt was hugely missing in good restaurants

cuisine and ingredients, something I felt was hugely missing in good restaurants in India. We all wanted a restaurant that was accessible, user-friendly, affordable and fun," he says.

OPENED March

FLOYD CARDOZ SPARKED IT OFF, ATUL KOCHHAR AND GAGGAN ANAND FOLLOW SUIT. WHY OUR TOP CHEFS OVERSEAS ARE MAKING A BEELINE FOR MUMBAI.

by pioneering chefs such as Rahul Akerkar, Manu Chandra, Vineet Bhatia and Zorawar Kalra who worked the sledgehammer to crack the ceiling of stagnation that Indian food had hit. Indian food is officially fun. Here's who is playing and why.

Chef Atul Kochhar, Benares, London THE AROMA OF MIGRATION

Originally a Delhi boy, Atul Kochhar believes in the experimentality of Mumbai over the more-recentlyawakened taste buds of the Capital. Returning professionally after 21

GAGGAN ANAND 37

Of Gaggan, Bangkok fame

RESTAURANT Undecided
LOCATION Mumbai
VIBE Fine dining, formal
CONCEPT Progressive Indian
SIGNATURE DISH Yoghurt explosion,
Anand's twist on the papri chaat
WHY INDIA NOW Indian chefs living
abroad, believes Anand, are finally
realising that India cannot be ignored.
The best customers come from our own
country, he says, and Indians are finally
open to change.
OPENS Early 2016



ROHIT CHAWLA

years, Kochhar says he had to leave the shores to be called an Indian, and stop being identified as a Punjabi. It's a freedom that also allowed him to explore Indian food holistically. "Wherever I travel, I always eat a local food and any available Indian food," he says. The discovery of Indian food, its ingredients, and the history of their mutations on foreign shores became a personal research archive of sorts. And so Kochhar found plague-fighting nutmeg incorporated into Swedish meatballs, cumin in African Jolloff rice, the beans-soaked bread of the bunny chow of South African migrant labourers, the dosa-lined thaal of Ethiopia and the chickpea influence brought over by the Bihari farm hands peppered across the Caribbean.

Kochhar's first two Mumbai ventures are Not Really Indian, a restaurant in Mumbai's new corporate heart Bandra-Kurla Complex scheduled to open in October, and later Lima, a Latino lounge bar. Both are a huge break away from the luxury cuisine he is identified by. Kochhar picked a casual vibe with a street food ethic because he wasn't willing to risk coming back and serving Indians boring Indian food. "These are recipes that left India and never came back, and become bigger than Buddhism did when it left India," he says.

Kochhar has traced the migratory paths of Indian food in Singapore, Malaysia, in East Africa going down to South Africa, travelling to West Africa, the Caribbean, and England. "Doing NRI food, I don't have to explain it to anyone. It's 'Indianesque' food that's become very different because of the demographics it grew up in," he explains. Malay Chicken Korma, an essential Indian export along with trade ties, for instance, uses coconut milk with aniseed, star anise, fennel—all no-nos in India. Along with the bunny chow come the stories of migrants who were not allowed through the front doors of the apartheid regime.



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SOCIETY DINING

On its homecoming, the migrated Indian food will undergo one more evolution: Kochhar's. "Wherever human migration has taken place, fusion has happened and I think it's progressive. Everything we eat today is fusion," he says.

Gaggan Anand, Gaggan, Bangkok GENOME OF GASTRONOMY

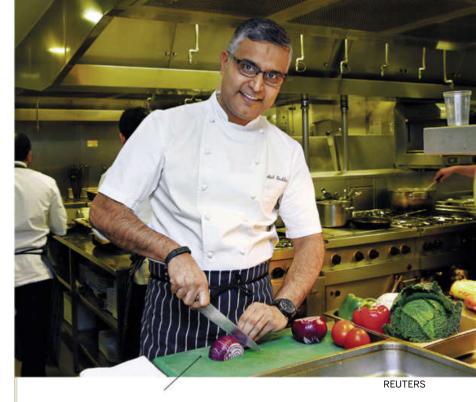
That Ferran Adria-acolyte Gaggan Anand is a sentimental man is evident: he rang up his mother in Kolkata and sobbed when his eponymous eatery was announced Asia's number one. The mama's boy is just as attached to his motherland. Hardly surprising then that he has decided to return to India with a restaurant in Mumbai early next year.

Anand left the country a little less than a decade ago. He returns once every three months, making sure he eats his way through the cities he visits. The street is where he finds inspiration for his menu at Gaggan, which includes papri chaat and puchkas modified with molecular gastronomy.

The last time he was in India hosting pop-up restaurants in Mumbai and Delhi, he lugged around 260 kg of equipment and ingredients from Thailand. This September, he will be travelling empty-handed to begin his experiments on Indian audiences, taking notes on what works and what doesn't sit well with the Indian palette in preparation for his India debut. "People are always telling me how my food is so good because I have access to all these ingredients abroad. So this time, I plan to use only what's available in the local market. It will be a 'make in India' meal," claims the chef. But don't expect an aloo gobi or a gobi ka parantha on his menu. The unpredictable chef has ideas such as gobi ice cream up his sleeve.

Will Indians respond well to the chemistry in his kitchen? Mumbai, he expects, will be far more experimental than Delhi and that is why he wants to set up here first.

Looking forward to using Indian ingredients such as asafoetida and poppy seeds to his heart's content, what he is even more thrilled about is catering to the Indian palette. "It is



ATUL KOCHHAR 46

Of Benares restaurant, London fame

RESTAURANTS Not Really Indian; later plans to launch Lima, a Latino lounge bar LOCATION Bandra-Kurla Complex in Mumbai, Delhi in the pipeline VIBE Casual dining CONCEPT Indian foods that went overseas and never came back

SIGNATURE DISH Chicken tikka shepherd's

pie, and the South African bunny chow and bobotie

WHY INDIA NOW There's an India. Kochhar says, he's been watching grow and get better-well-travelled, lush with disposable income, open to experimentation, and reclaiming its own turf in the world—and he's been itching to come back and join it.

OPENS End-October

feeding people who actually enjoy flavours such as that of asafoetida that I miss the most," he admits.

Chef Floyd Cardoz, North End Grill, NYC BE GLOCAL, BUY LOCAL

You're more likely to find him mucking about at Mumbai's Grant Road railway station market in his shorts than at the Parsi-influence bar of his restaurant. Floyd Cardoz, the guy who reinvented upma for the world and made breakfast night food, is the kind who takes a gamble, on spaces, people and ingredients. Cluster beans send him into raptures-and don't even talk about the beets.

When The Bombay Canteen opened, it needed to be fun, light, accommodating, and serve great food, reflective of an egalitarian Mumbai vibe that all three cofounders, Cardoz and Sameer Seth and Yash Bhanage share. While Cardoz is the one who grew up here, Seth is a Delhi boy and

Bhanage a Pune brat. Mumbai is the only place in India where the melting point allows all that to meld together, Cardoz points out.

Cardoz has none of the grumbles about the lack of ingredients or suppliers most other chefs do. He's thrilled by the variety of local vegetables that do not normally make it to restaurant kitchens, as much as he is surprised by the neglect of them. "As chefs we tend to fall into the trap of telling the diner what he should be eating instead of listening," he says. His walkabouts are his way of listening.

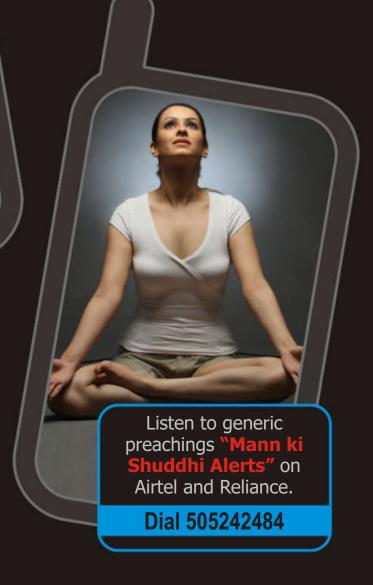
A sense of humour and an eye for the unusual is vital to eat chez Cardoz. Mumbai serves it up plentifully; no wonder, then, that The Bombay Canteen is fast acquiring the reputation of being the most difficult restaurant to land a table at in the city.

> Follow the writers on Twitter @Gayatri J and @MoeenaH

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^{*} Rs 2 per day for festival pack.

^{*} Re 1 per day for Mann ki Shuddhi.

Graphic by NAOREM SANJOY SINGH **WRIST** WORTHY Apple Watch **Fitbit** Which of the 3.6 4.4 mn* wearable technology mn is the most popular this year? Garmin Smartwatch 0.7 mn Mi Band $1\,\mathrm{mn}$

*No. of users across the world. Source: Statista; Last updated: August 2015

👏 net fail

In Poor Taste

Tamil magazine Kumudam Reporter's article on how women wearing leggings often crossed the line of decency has irked netizens across the country. Accompanied with distasteful pictures, an online petition to retract the article has got more than 1,400 signatures.



web lol

A self-confessed fan of Alia Bhatt, B.P. Chaube, seems to have one dream—to get Bhatt to respond to his tweets which have gone viral. While in one tweet he cheekily tells the actor that she can keep her last name when they get married, in another he has photoshopped one of Bhatt's latest film's posters to include himself in it. The Web has found his persistence hilarious, although a tad creepy too.





🔰 web wow

Royal Blessings

Pope Francis, during a papal parade in Philadelphia, stopped his motorcade to kiss a baby dressed like him. A video of the incident has got more than 3 million views.



smart sheet | Say No to Racism



After Rini Sampath, the student body president at the University of Southern California, was called an "Indian piece of shit" by her classmates, she wrote a moving Facebook post about racism on American college campuses. Her post, which says that racism, sexism, homophobia or transphobia in any form "is never okay", has been shared 1,500 times.

what's new App Alert

Sizzl is a dating app that connects thousands of bacon lovers.



Move to iOS facilitates the easy shifting of files between Android and Apple phones.



👏 net campaign

A Meaty Matter



Falah Faisal, a Muslim stand-up comedian from Bengaluru, has launched an online petition demanding a ban on vegetables on Bakr Eid. The campaign, started as a response to various states banning meat during Jain festival Paryushan Parva, has seen more than 1,400 netizens signing his manifesto that states 'plants have feelings too'.

viral video



More than 3.5 million netizens were amused to see a lion cub trying to roar.



A video of a girl crying after tasting Pepsi for the first time wowed more than 1 million.



A squirrel stealing a milkshake from a trash can in NYC shocked more than 800.000 netizens.

Follow the writer on Twitter @lkummi



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Where Fashion Gets Personal

By Moeena Halim

normous posters of Eric Clapton, Bono, Jim Morrison and Madonna hang in the background as Shruti Pathak, 32, takes the microphone at the Hard Rock Café in Mumbai. Dressed in a flowing skirt and a sleeveless top showing off the tattoo on her arm, the singer is joined by her band of musicians. There's little out of the ordinary about this, except that Pathak is here to perform the ghazals that she has grown up appreciating.

In the national capital, singer Rashmi Agarwal, in her early 50s, also has a unique twist to offer to ghazals. Trained by Shanti Hiranand, a shagird (pupil) of the legendary Begum Akhtar, Agarwal is nervously but determinedly taking the leap, marrying jazz melodies with the moving words of ghazal. On the other hand, 42-year-old Tauseef Akhtar's new genre, ghazalaw, has the ghazal mingling with celtic folk music. "Since both styles are based on romantic poetry, they have a lot of similarities," explains Akhtar.

Instrumental Change

At a time when ghazal is witnessing a somewhat diminished patronage, artistes such as Pathak, Agarwal and Akhtar are trying their best to make it more palatable to the younger audience. Something Jagjit Singh and Chitra Singh managed to do in the 1970s, when the ghazal was almost on the brink of extinction. Following in his guru Jagjit Singh's footsteps, Akhtar, who launched his solo album Ishq Karo in August, continues to experiment with a new sound for ghazals, basing his music on western harmony.

Agarwal, who also thrives on experimentation, says she is driven by the need to create something that has

Rashmi Agarwal 51 New Delhi

Guru Shanti Hiranand

Experiments Agarwal, with her band The Z Factor, is combining jazz music with ghazal. "While traditional ghazal and jazz may sound different, both styles speak from the heart," she explains. The band will perform live in Delhi on November 2.

TUNE INTO NEW

A group of new-age ghazal singers is experimenting with the genre, hoping to reach out to younger audiences



CHANDRADEEP KUMAR

never been heard before. Currently, she is working on bringing together the similar improvisation techniques of jazz and traditional ghazal music. Along with her group of musicians—her band is known as The Z Factor—she wants to reach out to as many listeners as possible. It is something Akhtar has achieved with ghazalaw, which has seen performances across Britain and India.

Meanwhile, Pathak, who has lent her voice to popular Bollywood

numbers such as 'Mar Jawan' (Fashion, 2008) and 'Shubhaarambh' (Kai Po Che, 2013), has a brand new YouTube show, Guzzler Café, hopes to make a sustained attempt to popularise the beautiful poetry that is ghazal. Her mantra on the show is to showcase 'ghazals with a twist'. "Guzzler came at a phase in my life when I wanted to do something apart from playback singing. I decided to give the younger generation a new-age rendition of ghazals," explains Pathak.

The fact that ghazal is, in principle, a form of poetry, allows a certain flexibility in its musicality. "Technically, there are no parameters that musicians must follow. They can do whatever they like with the poetry. The question is whether they are able to give the audience what it expects," says Tushar Bhatia, music director and sitar player, trained in Indian classical music.

Also, when it comes to the subject of ghazals, it's more than just romance and heartbreak. "Most young people think ghazals are mostly about lost love. But I'd like to show that it's a myth. If you dig into the genre, you'll find there's so much more," says Pathak. From joy to anguish, patriotism to contemporary social problems, modern ghazal writers focus on a host of issues. "Ab main ration ki qataron mein nazar aata hoon," wrote Vadodara-based poet and ghazal singer Khalil Dhantejvi. While he complains about inflation in this poem, Shamim Karhani's ghazal Ishq Karo, composed by Akhtar for his latest album, talks of a need to spread love rather than fan the smoke of hatred in society.

Countering Criticism

Jagjit Singh, the original modernist ghazal composer, may have vocalised contemporary issues, been keenly interested in Western music, and enjoyed a close association with Bollywood, but he never diluted the essence of the ghazal, observes Bhatia.

Losing the essence, the "ruh and mizhaj" (soul and temperament) of the ghazal is something ghazal maestro Talat Aziz believes would be sacrilege. "Just like a beautiful girl can wear anything as long as it accentuates her beauty, so it is with the ghazal. This ahilaf (cover) of contemporary music must suit her rather than make her something she's not," says Aziz. Singer and dramatist Rita Ganguly aptly sums it up when she says: "Ammi (Ustad Begum Akhtar) also modernised the ghazal during her times. I feel that as long as the meaning and beauty is not murdered but enhanced, there's nothing to worry about." Both, nextgen singers and listeners, would agree with that.





Guru Jagjit Singh

Experiments Ghazalaw is a new genre, combining ghazal with Celtic folk music. Both styles are based on romantic poetry and have a lot of similarities, says Akhtar. His Ghazalaw album has released worldwide on September 25. This will be followed by a nine-city tour of the UK in November.



Shruti Pathak 32 Mumbai

Guru Self-taught

Experiments Pathak has been repackaging her favourite ghazals along with her band Guzzler, which includes a drummer, bass guitarist and keyboardist. She hosts Guzzler Cafe, a channel dedicated to ghazals on YouTube.

DANESH JASSAWALA

IN REALITY: TRULY, DEEPLY, **MADLY**

The women in his life

He had no memory of his mother, Zainab, who had died when he was just 18 months old—a reason why he never painted the faces of the women he portrayed.

Mehmooda Bibi, a widow, who had become a surrogate mother for him in Mumbai, when he used to slog over film hoardings come rain or shine.

Mehmooda's daughter, Fazila Bibi. was Husain's wife and mother of his six children. A simple homemaker and a great cook, she had no connect with his public life.



His work in the late 1950s was dedicated to Maria Jaroslav Jurkova, his interpreter in Prague, Czechoslovakia, in 1953. He gifted her 50 paintings and proposed marriage. But she refused. She was the lead character of his film Meenaxi: A Tale of Three Cities.



ternal Motif

Galloping horses were a leitmotif for Husain since 1951.



HUSAIN

Strong and galloping, with reared heads and in intense motion, the Sprinkling Horses (1970s) fetched Rs 5.4 crore at a Christie's auction in 2011.



CAVE ART

At least 32,000 years ago, prehistoric humans had painted darkmaned cantering horses in the earliest known cave art in France's Chauvet-Pont-d'Arc Cave.



CHINESE ART

For 5,000 years, the horse has been at the centre of mythology and royal art, especially ink sketches of prancing horses by artist Han Gan under Tang dynasty (AD 712 to 756).

ndred and Not Out

Magbool Fida Husain and what made him the most colourful persona on the canvas of modern Indian art

-MANY MUSES OF MF-

All his life his art was influenced by the search for Indian femininity

1. MISS GULAB

The pretty Anglo-Indian star of silent movies in the 1920s. Husain first saw her on screen as a young boy in what was possibly the first wet scene of Indian cinema. And he was floored.

2. RUBY MYERS 'SULOCHANA'

An Anglo-Indian Jewish girl from Pune who became a top silent-era star. She hogged headlines for earning more than the governor of Bombay and for a kissing scene in Hamara Hindustan (1930). Husain described her as the most beautiful woman he had ever seen.

3. NASEEM BANU

Saira Banu's mother and the "first female superstar" of Indian cinema, the 1930s star was also called pari chehra (fairy-like). Husain spent his early years in Mumbai as a film poster painter, obsessively painting her portraits.

4. MUMTAZ

Believe it or not, the art titans-Husain, Tyeb Mehta and V.S. Gaitonde-were all fans of the nubile star. Apparently, Husain would whistle and throw coins at the screen whenever she appeared.

5. MADHURI DIXIT

"No one compares to her." said Husain, who first met her in 1994 at an award function. The rest is history: he watched Hum Aapke Hain Koun 67 times and

painted a series depicting her in various moods. She also played the lead in his film Gaja Gamini.

6. TABU

She's Madhuri's mirror image, he felt. "Sometimes I feel Madhuri's an illusion while Tabu's down to earth. If Madhuri's real. Tabu's ethereal." He made Meenaxi: A Tale of Three Cities with her in 2004.

7. AMRITA RAO

He found the "essence of Indian woman" in her character. Poonam. in Vivaah. Every painting had a full moon, literally poonam, in the background.



But it's not just him. The equine form has had a long run on the artistic imagination of the world.



PICASSO

A horse screaming in pain in Pablo Picasso's famous Guernica (1937) represents the plight of Spanish people during Franco's fascist regime.



DA VINCI

Leonardo da Vinci's horse, a bronze monument (also known as Gran Cavallo), that he designed in 1482 but could not complete—a regret he expressed on his deathbed.



DALI

A white horse in Salvador Dali's Temptation of St Anthony (1946) is all about temptations from the devil-power, carnality and unconscious desires.

A GYPSY WHO **BELIEVED IN** WORKING HARD



Known for his playful eccentricity: flowing white beard and hair, unshod feet, impeccably tailored Hermes suits and the oversized paintbrush that he always carried like a baton.

A habitual wanderer. he went wherever his heart took him, and could turn any place hotels to galleries into his studio.

Extremely prolific, he was known for working hard: getting up every day with sunrise and working long hours. He could finish a painting in just a couple of hours.

In exile, Husain was working on two projects—one on the history of Indian culture commissioned by the Lakshmi Mittal family, and a second by the wife of the Emir of Qatar, on the history of Arab civilisation.

EYECATCHERS

ACTORS WITHOUT BORDERS

Ranbir and Neetu Kapoor's support for Pakistani actress Mawra Hocane on social media has paid off. Hocane will beat her compatriot Mahira Khan to make her Bollywood debut in Sanam Teri Kasam in January. Directed by Radhika Rao and Vinay Sapru, infamously known for Salman Khan-starrer Lucky... No Time For Love, Hocane will be seen romancing Telugu actor Harshvardhan Rane.



DIAVTIME

PLAYTIME

One of the most renowned theatre directors Peter Brook, 90, is revisiting the Sanskrit epic Mahabharata. But this time around the scale is smaller as Brook's Battlefield focuses on how Yudhisthir and Dhritarashtra are distressed and repentant in the aftermath of the devastating war. The play opens in Paris and then tours internationally.

TELLY TALES

Farhan Akhtar is giving the idiot box another shot. After not-so-memorable stints as host of a talk show Oye! It's Friday! and a judge on Nach Baliye, the director-turned-actor will now be a "confidant and motivator" to a few small screen celebrities on Zee TV's I Can Do That. It remains to be seen if Akhtar can be third time lucky on TV.





MARCHING AHEAD

Even before Shashank Arora makes a splash with the film festivals-acclaimed debut, *Titli*, he is already cementing his footing in Bollywood. Arora will next be seen alongside Farhan Akhtar in *Rock On 2!* and is also the leading man in Bengali filmmaker Qaushiq Mukherjee's next.

SMELLS LIKE INDIE SPIRIT



HOW WAS THE WEEK?



SUPER Chaitanya Tamhane and Vivek Gomber The writer-director and

producer-actor and producer-actor of the multi-lingual film Court, selected as India's entry to the Oscars.



GREAT Pankaj AdvaniVon the IBSF World

Won the IBSF World Billiards Championships, his 14th world title.

Compiled by Suhani Singh
 Follow the writer on Twitter @suhani84

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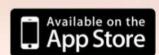
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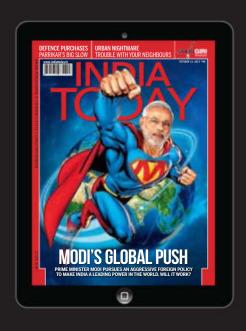








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UK LAUNCHES THIRD EDITION OF THE GREAT DEBATE



hat do you get when you start a dialogue between the world's oldest democracy and the world's largest one? A great debate. The British High Commission, New Delhi, recently launched the third edition of The GREAT Debate 2015 at the British Council in Delhi. The debate, that is being hosted by Sri Venkateshwara College, Delhi University, this year, is

a series of competitions organised in ten major metros. The idea behind the initiative is to understand the mood of the youth towards socio-political and cultural changes taking place around them. While previous debates covered topics such as gender equality and energy security, this year is a treat for Shakespeare fans as the competition will conduct debates focused on his

celebrated works. According to Hannah Cockburn, Head, Political and Bilateral Affairs, British High Commission, "It gives an opportunity to celebrate the UK and India's shared tradition of reasoned debate and our close educational ties." Anamika Sen, 21, pursuing her master's in economics from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Delhi, and winner of the first edition of The GREAT Debate 2013 shared her experience saying, "At the time of my visit, the Scottish referendum was about to take place. Whatever I had read about the referendum was through a prism, but meeting Scottish parliamentarians gave me a clearer picture." The

debate concludes in January 2016 and offers the winning team a week-long trip to the UK. The visit will not be a typical tourist's excursion through the country, but a learning experience that covers prominent historical sites, educational institutes and interactions with political personalities. For queries, email Greatdebate.bhc@fco.gov.uk

By Ursila Ali



NEW ON THE BLOCK



IIT KHARAGPUR LAUNCHES ANNUAL BUSINESS MODEL COMPETITION

IIT Kharagpur's student-organised Entrepreneurship Cell will soon undertake its annual global business model competition called Empresario. The cell has successfully incubated 50 start-ups over eight years, since it began, and uses Empresario as a medium to mentor start-ups by introducing them to a dynamic business model of functioning. Shortlisted start-ups will be advised by organisations such as TiE and National Entrepreneurship Network (NEN) that will coach them in legal services, technical and financial aspects of starting a venture, HR needs of the business and taxation queries. The winning teams have the opportunity to win a cash prize of ₹15 lakh. Check www.ecell-iitkgp.org/empresario

Museum to House Inventions

In an innovative endeavour, the Rashtrapati Bhavan, Delhi, recently launched "Navachara", a museum for science and technological exploration powered by the Intel India group. The inaugural ceremony for the museum, whose name translates into 'new ideas', was felicitated by President, Pranab Mukherjee and Intel India president Kumud Srinivasan.

The museum uses a revolutionary approach to cultivate and inspire talented young minds in the field of technology. The constantly evolving display showcases indigenously developed projects, created mostly by students. One such cutting edge feature is a 3D printer, which creates solid objects from digital prototypes, by layering the material until the final object is printed. An interesting addition is Clumsy, a

robotic dog developed by Arsh Dilbagi, a student from Panipat. The dog is able to perform various functions such as walking and squatting, through a microcontroller board with inbuilt sensors. The museum also includes a variety of sense-operated musical instruments, including a 'virtual tabla' and a 'stringless piano', neither of which require tangible touch to operate. The 'talking wall' and a 'planet wall' on the other hand, are interactive audio-visual displays that provide information regarding scientific fairs in the country and other successful young innovators. Another unusual feature is a 3D selfie with a background of the Rashtrapati Bhavan, which can be clicked using a 3D camera. The museum, part of the entire tour of the Bhavan, is open to the public with no fee and is accessible only By Ambika Tandon on weekends.





VIT UNIVERSITY RECORDS UNPRECEDENTED PLACEMENTS

Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) University held their placements sessions for 2015 in September this year, at their Chennai and Vellore campuses. The top five IT companies in the country, including Infosys, Cognizant, Accenture, Wipro and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) participated and a whopping 7,947 job offers were made to students from various stream at the University. The average salary package this year is ₹3 lakh to ₹3.5 lakh, 10 per cent higher than last year. Cognizant made the highest number of offers, a total of 1,914.

MBD Group launches teacher capacity building programme



MBD DIRECTOR MONICA MALHOTRA KANDHARI INAUGURATES THE DISHA PROGRAMME

The MBD Group, India, in L collaboration with Imagine Education from the UK has launched a pioneering project titled MBD Disha in September last month. The project will target school teachers and principals from schools across the country, in order to strengthen their skills sets and self-assessment. Apart from providing comprehensive knowledge of a wide range of subjects, the curricula will also focus on the enhancement of motivation and self-esteem amongst educators. The ultimate aim of the venture is to bridge the widening gap in the demand of quality education in the country as compared with its supply. The programme was launched at the Delhi Book Fair, 2015, and was followed by a panel discussion on several aspects and challenges of capacity-building. On the occasion of the launch of MBD Disha, Monica Malhotra Kandhari, Senior Director, MBD Group said, "MBD Disha is aimed at providing appropriate training and assessment. It will monitor, review, and give feedback that will foster teacher's commitment for effective teaching and learning process."



Pathways School holds festival on Masculinity

athways School, Noida, recently held its annual festival titled Resonance. Following last year's theme of women empowerment, this year's festival was based on the concept of masculinity. The opening ceremony began with a musical performance followed by a welcome speech by Dr Shalini Advani, Director, Pathways School, Noida. The chief guest at the event was actor Rahul Roy, who has previously done films

that question masculinity, communalism and the state of labour in the country. Roy spoke extensively about the origins of masculinity and how society deals with its current manifestations. Strong participation was seen from 12 schools across the city, including Delhi Public School in Noida, Sri Ram School in Gurgaon and Vasant Valley among others. The panel discussions explored the foundation of masculinity in our society, with topics ranging from its historical evolution and the adverse implications it has

MASCULINITY THEMED GRAFFITI **COMPETITION AT RESONANCE 2015**

for both genders. The students engaged in diverse activities, including film screenings from offbeat cinema, graffiti competitions, a debate on cinematic objectification of men and 'Alter Ego', a competition which required students to present two differing images of masculinity from literary representations.

By engaging in theoretical ideas through such diverse, practical and entertaining activities, the festival

proved to be successful in sensitising students to the functions of the imposition of gender-based standards upon individuals and deepened their understanding of the world they live in. The rolling trophy for the year was awarded to Vasant Valley School, Delhi. Ayona Sengupta, a student at the school said, "Resonance 2015 has taught me that gender is nothing but a social construct, one that we can challenge and remould with time. Masculinity, though it often brings to mind thoughts of dominance and authority, is more than the division of power. It is much more than a sense of entitlement. It is an evolving concept, something that has been growing and changing with time."





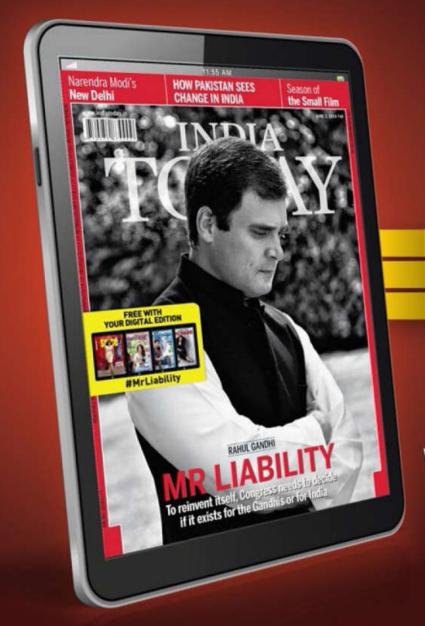
JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY ANNOUNCES NEW **ANALYTICS PROGRAMME** Jadavpur University. Kolkata, has recently declared the development of an analytics programme, to be offered to students pursuing a Master's degree in Economics. The programme is being constructed in alliance with Genpact, a global leader in business process outsourcing. It will provide a dynamic theoretical approach which will help incorporate aspects of practical experience.

CAMBRIDGE INTRODUCES APP FOR

TEACHERS Cambridge English Language Assessment, a part of the University of Cambridge, unveiled a new application for Indian teachers in September, called Cambridge English India Network. It is essentially an online portal to enable educators to connect and share resources, thereby delivering a platform for ideation and innovation in the field of education.



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Professional, short-term programmes for those who want to brush up their skills but don't have the luxury of time

Food and Hospitality

hen Janki Patel, 27, working as a front desk manager in a Mumbai hotel wanted to switch careers, she joined a three month-long baking and patisserie course in Bangalore. Over the past one year, she's supplied cakes to bakeries in Mumbai and is now setting up her home baking venture. With short-term courses offering quick fix training for professionals who don't have the time to go through regular undergraduate degree courses, a gamut of careers are opening up in the food and hospitality sector. New hotels, cafes and restaurants and retail stores are setting up shop offering career opportunities and growth possibilities. From noted hospitality institutes to privately run courses and baking schools, there are opportunities for those who want to take up short-term courses to boost their career. Candidates can look for placements as chefs, housekeeping and hotel managers.

TOP COURSES

- **) Bakery and confectionery** Three-month part time diploma at ASK Institute of Bakery and Confectionary, Bangalore, www.studyaskibc.com
- **Wines and spirits** Three-month course at the Indian Institute of Bartending, Chennai. www.iibtindia.com
- **> Food and beverage service** Six-month certificate course at Amro Institute, Nashik in association with the Maharashtra State Board of Vocational Examinations, Mumbai. www.amroinstitutes.com
- **> Bartending** Three-month intensive course at Cocktails and Dreams Beverage and Bar Studio, New Delhi. www.cocktailsndreams.net

ELIGIBILITY

Class 10

JOB PROSPECTS

Bartender, beverage manager, patisserie chef, restaurant and café service

Monthly salaries start at ₹15,000 and go upto ₹2 lakh





Mass Media

ass media is all about being part of a larger story where opinions are voiced and untold tales shared. From music production to journalism, these short-term courses equip an individual with the tools to create good content for dissemination. Within the radar of mass media fall TV, radio, news, filmmaking and music production which are now taught at numerous specialised institutes over the country. News journalism which was a niche education option has now become wider encompassing variants such as broadcast, print and digital media to choose from. The one-year diploma courses on offer in media institutes like Asian College of Journalism, Chennai, and Indian Institute of Mass Communication, Delhi, are known to train journalists and also help them secure jobs in the industry. While filmmaking institutes prepare students for camera operation, script writing, video editing and cinematography, music academies on the other hand, like True School of Music, Mumbai, maintain small classrooms and train good music composers.

- **> Radio and TV journalism** One-year postgraduate diploma at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC), New Delhi. www.iimc.nic.in
- **) Journalism** One-year postgraduate diploma at Asian College of Journalism, Chennai. www.asianmedia.org
- **> Pro Sound engineering** One-year intensive course at the True School of Music, Mumbai. www.trueschool.in
- **) Creative documentary** One-year intensive filmmaking course at Sri Aurobindo Centre for Arts and Communication, New Delhi. www.sac.ac.in
- **> Feature film screenplay writing** One-year diploma at the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), Pune. www.ftiindia.com

ELIGIBILITY

Bachelor's degree

JOB PROSPECTS

Journalist, public relations executive, radio jockey, TV news production, music composer, and filmmaker

Monthly salaries start from ₹20,000 and go upto ₹1.5 lakh



Niche Arts

With the fine arts scene witnessing a revival in the form of specialised sub-disciplines and curriculum, there's an interest in honing aesthetic sense. The marginal status of fine arts is undergoing a change, both in terms of perception and pedadogy. The benefits of enrolling in short-term courses in arts may not be immediately obvious but the compact programme structure draws more out of students. A hands-on course that engages comprehensively with students is often convenient than a degree course. Contrary to popular opinion, these skill-driven courses are not limited to the medium of observation. Being skill-based, these are transferable to different environments and act as a refresher session. Convenient for testing the waters instead of plunging headlong into a full-time course, it offers breadth to make up for the lack of depth. Linguistics, fine art and museology tie up into an interesting profile offering a range of prospects spanning creative design to archiving.

- **Art appreciation** Five-month course at National Museum Institute of History of Art, Conservation and Museology, Delhi. www.nmi.gov.in
- **Introduction to linguistics** Two-month course at Deccan College Postgraduate and Research Institute, Pune. www.deccancollegepune.ac.in
- **> Archives keeping** One-year postgraduate diploma at Annamalai University, Chennai as a part-time evening course. www.annamalaiuniversity.ac.in
- **> Photography and interior decoration** One-year apprentice training course at Sir J.J. Institute of Applied Art, Mumbai. jjiaa.org

ELIGIBILITY

10+2, Bachelor's degree for Annamalai University

JOB PROSPECTS

Museum/gallery curator, illustrator, graphic designer, art historian/dealer, and archive conservator

Starting from ₹20,000, it can go upto ₹60,000 per month

Healthcare

From a nutrition expert to a nurse assistant, diverse job opportunities are now being offered in the healthcare and wellness sector, partly due to rising awareness on preventive healthcare and fitness. Most of the short-term courses in this sector offer flexibility in terms of the teaching mode you could opt for distance learning or take classes over the weekend. This opens up learning opportunities for working professionals who can take up such courses alongside their day job to give them an edge in their careers. There are a lot of hands-on courses being offered by most healthcare facilities for different categories of employees hired by hospitals today including doctors, nurses and the paramedical workforce. Diplomas in critical care or emergency medicine not only train nurses for a specialised career in emergency and ICU departments of a hospital, but also entitle them to a differential compensation as compared to a regular ward nurse.



TOP COURSES

- > Hospital care assistant One-year certificate course at Dayanand Medical College and Hospital, Ludhiana, which also has similar courses in orthopaedic techniques and operation theatre assistant, www.dmch.edu
- **Sanitary inspector** One-year diploma at the All India Institute of Local Self Government, Mumbai, with centres in all major cities. www.aiilsg.org
- **Clinical nutrition** Five-month intensive course at the Exercise Science Academy, Mumbai, which also has similar courses in sports nutrition and weight management. www.exercisescienceacademy.com
- **> Nursing administration** One-year diploma at the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) with centres in major cities. www.ignou.ac.in

ELIGIBILITY

10+2 in science, work experience for IGNOU

JOB PROSPECTS

Nutrition expert, fitness trainer, sanitary inspector and nurse

Starting from ₹7000, it can go upto ₹75,000 per month



Information Technology & Science

The human race has advanced rapidly on technological and scientific fronts in the last decade. Considering the free and easy access to information today, scientific discoveries and inventions are within the grasp of anyone with a technical bent of mind. Along with the major science and engineering degrees that most opt for, there are numerous short-term diplomas and certificate courses that can be used to either supplement your main education or specialise in a completely new field. All data is recorded electronically these days and analysing this information to organise and predict future market trends gives rise to business analytics, a skill that is in great demand in every industry. Agriculture technology, nautical science and solar engineering are other specific fields of science that have an increasing demand for efficient professionals.

TOP COURSES

- **> Business analytics** One-year postgraduate diploma at Symbiosis Centre for Management and Human Resource Development (SCMHRD), Pune. www.scmhrd.edu
- **> Soil science and agricultural chemistry** One-year postgraduate course at the Indian Agricultural Research Înstitute, Delhi, which has a wide range of similar agricultural courses (IARI). www.iari.res.in
- **Nautical science** One-year diploma at the International Maritime Institute (IMI), Greater Noida. www.imi.edu.in
- Solar photovoltaic application, design and technology Three-month certificate course at Gujarat Institute of Solar Energy (GISE), Gujarat which also has three-day technical solar workshops. www.gise.in

Bachelor's degree in any field for SCMHRD and GISE, in science for IARI and IMI

JOB PROSPECTS

Data analyst, soil scientist, merchant navy and solar engineer

Starting at ₹15,000, it can go upto ₹1.2 lakh per month



Tourism

Proficiency in a foreign language combined with an L outgoing personality is all you need to launch a career that takes you places, literally. As new roles emerge in the hospitality industry, a crash course in tourism and culture studies can pave the way for interesting job profiles. Aviation and catering are booming sectors within the larger scheme of tourism. When supplemented with managerial experience and problem solving skills, the role of tour guide extends beyond that of travel consultant. You become a travel guide, concierge and knowledge expert rolled into one. Cultural awareness imparts a nuanced edge to the profile, adding to a tour guide's credentials. Combine the best that the hospitality and tourism sector has to offer to build up a covetable profile. While travel agencies continue to be the obvious choice absorbing most tourism diploma holders, related areas of specialisation are also opening up like adventure tourism expert, holiday consultant and food travel expert. Cultural heritage in relation to local gastronomy is on its way to becoming one of the biggest travel trends.

- **> Heritage management** 10-month postgraduate diploma from Centre for Museology and Conservation at the University of Rajasthan. www.uniraj.ac.in
- > Travel and tourism management One-year postgraduate diploma from Kuoni Academy, Srinagar. www.kuoniacademy.co.in
- > Travel and tourism Four-month certificate course from Delhi University (DU). Includes modules on tour planning, international fare calculation and computer reservation system. www.du.ac.in
- > Tourism and environmental law One-year postgraduate diploma from National Law University, Delhi in collaboration with World Wildlife Fund (WWF). www.nludelhi.ac.in

ELIGIBILITY

Bachelor's degree in any discipline and 10+2 for DU

JOB PROSPECTS

Interpreter, tour guide, information assistant, and cultural consultant

Starting from ₹30,000, salaries can go upto ₹1 lakh

Making Science Matter

Sixteen science teachers from India get to experience zero gravity and pilot a spacecraft in a simulative space programme in the US



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ost children who are inclined towards science develop a fascination for space travel and aspire to become astronauts in their earlier years, but as time passes the dream fades away and they are replaced by more achievable goals, leaving only a determined few who persist and make it. It is here that teachers with practical understanding of the sciences can do wonders in imparting enthusiasm for the subject, to the children they teach. In an attempt to inspire these educators, Honeywell Educators @ Space Academy (HESA), a professional development programme to help middle school mathematics and science teachers from across the world, held its 11th space programme in Alabama, US, on June 10 this year, which saw participation of over 200 teachers from 55 countries, 16 of them being from India. In collaboration with the US Space and Rocket Center (USSRC), Honeywell, which is a reputed global technology solutions firm, has awarded fully paid scholarships to more than 2,341 teachers from over the world since they launched the programme in 2004.

Mission to the moon The five-day training programme entailed rigorous training focused on science and space exploration exercises such as jet simulation, survival training, a simulated lunar mission and building an ablative shield to protect the ship while reentering the earth's atmosphere. They also got to learn Environmental

Control and Life Support Systems (ECLSS) that involved keeping the atmosphere within the ship stable and recycling clean drinking water from astronaut urine. In addition to the technical aspects of space flight, they were introduced to the physiological and psychological difficulties faced by astronauts. "We learned that the biggest hindrance to space travel is psychology. Physiologically, we know that there are a lot of effects from microgravity, but the reality is that people go batty in small spaces with the same people for months and years on end. We have the technology to get us there, but haven't figured out how to sustain the psychological needs of humans in space," said one of the participating teachers, Prakash Chandra Sahoo of Shiv Nadar School, Gurgaon.

Learning from experience All the teachers have already begun to transfer their learning and experience from this initiative into their classrooms. Bhagyam Shekhar Ram from National Public School, Bangalore, said sharing her experience, "All the activities at the space programme were student centric and promoted active learning. Active learning is that which engages and challenges children. Such methods require us to 'make our own meaning' and help us develop our own perceptions of what we are learning. During this learning process we physically make neural connections in our brain."



HOLISTIC MANAGEMENT

Students at SP Jain Institute of Management and Research, Mumbai come to master the ropes of commerce but leave with a host of life skills



THE INSTITUTE, BUILT ON 45 ACRES, LIES IN THE HEART OF MUMBAI

ffiliated with the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (BVB), a 75-year-old socio-cultural and educational movement that promotes value based learning, the S.P. Jain Institute of Management and Research (SPJIMR) in Mumbai incorporates the same values while imparting business and management skills to its students. Established in 1981, the institute has emerged as one of the leading B-schools in India with several far-reaching innovations.

One of the few institutions in the country that offers practical knowledge in most family-run businesses, the institute started the postgraduation programme in Family Managed Business (FMB) in 1997. An 18-month long programme, it focuses on key topics such as constraints, opportunities and challenges that accompany operations of a family business, a smooth induction into the set-up and working in cooperation with previous generations. Another unique course offered by the Centre for Family Managed Business is the Women Management Programme (WMP) that helps women learn and understand concepts of business with equal weightage on family issues.

"In India, small and medium-scale businesses constitute 80 per cent of the economy. Most of these are family-run and hence the need to set up a business course that can equip youth to learn the ropes of family business," says Dr Tulsi Jaykumar who heads the programme at SPJIMR. "Usually we see second or

STUDENTS FROM POSTGRADUATE DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COURSE fourth generation scions from sectors like manufacturing, retail, trading and jewellery," he adds.

Subhashis Dutt, 24, from Kolkata, a part of his family's 134-year old umbrella manufacturing business says, "For growth of any family-run venture, knowledge of modern management is essential. I was exploring MBA opportunities abroad when I realised that an FMB course suits my needs better. My business is still run in a traditional manner; I was looking for a course structure that could understand the complexities of family business in India."

The institute has also introduced a novel programme through its Centre for Education in the Social Sector (CEDSS). The Postgraduate Programme in Development Management (PGDM) that commenced in 2011, is a 18-month long modular training for working executives from the development sector. Funded by Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, the course was started for the purpose of teaching management to the NGOs. "As a school of management, we seek local relevance as well as global impact. We see that professional management input, when coupled with the missionary zeal of the non-profit initiatives can enhance social impact. This is at the heart of our development sector programmes," says Dr Ranjan Banerjee, Dean, SPJIMR. Every batch enrolls 25 to 30 students with experience of more than 10 years in the social sector. The course has benefitted 175 social sector workers till now. "Executives come from as far as Assam and

Jharkhand for this course. It is an intense programme that not only teaches finance but looks at the intricacies of the development sector as well," says Professor Rukaiya Joshi, Chairperson, CEDSS. "Students learn project management, volunteer management and ways to effectively channel corporate social responsibility funds. They have worked on projects like polio eradication and thalassemia awareness under project management," she says.

The institute has also placed emphasis on social service through its Abhyudaya initiative that guides 240 postgraduate diploma students in mentoring underprivileged students and inculcating values of leadership, empathy, service and humility in them. Started in 2008, the initiative has been acknowledged at both national and international forums. The mentors visit slum kids, whom they call Sitaras, or stars, twice a month and spend three to four hours in coaching children on life skills, tutoring and guiding them and identifying their weaknesses and strengths. Meritorious Sitaras then go for the World Youth Leadership Summit in San Diego, US. Nandini Subramaniam, 23, a student of marketing is the mentor to Poomalar, a class 9 student. Subramaniam says, "More than teaching, there is so much I am taking back through my mentee, Poomalar. She has taught me positivity; she is exceptional at studies and on coaching her, I found the lacunae within our system that is obsessed with scoring marks through rote learning."



















EMBRACE ONLINE LEARNING

Acknowledging the possibilities of a positive child-tech relationship is the first step towards success

he process of information circulation has radically changed in the past decade. Sooner or later, your children will embark on their tryst with technology. The question is whether you will sit next to them on the broadband bandwagon and ensure that they fasten the safety belt. Here are the important conditions you should keep in mind when dealing with your child's relationship with technology.

Don't blame the medium of technology Parents often establish a principle of minimum exposure of their child to a world of technology seen as adult-centric, lacking substance and unsafe for them. It is most vital for parents to understand that it is the content in the medium and not the medium itself which is inappropriate. Acknowledging the vast possibilities of a positive child-technology relationship is the first step in exploring it.



MONITOR GADGET TIME, BUT DON'T LIMIT ACCESS

Utilise child-friendly interfaces The next step is finding a solution to the online content crisis. Online child-friendly content varies in quality and is found on generic websites that host other adult-oriented information without clear compartmentalisation. A possible solution for parents is accessing certain online platforms with child-friendly interfaces which provide safe, age-appropriate resources for young minds.

Adopt moderation Parents often equate the issue of overexposure with that of early exposure to technology. Fears of digital addiction, depression and obesity can be easily laid to rest by creating a balanced daily regimen for the child's mental, physical and social well-being. Child-friendly platforms offer enough mechanisms for parents to moderate their screen time as well.

Early exposure is **essential** It is imperative to introduce children to the vast knowledge base offered by technology in the formative years when they have an enhanced learning capacity. The world no longer abides by the traditional timeline of slow gradation. A technology-free environment for even a six-year-old child will hold them back for the rest of their life. With people like Mark Zuckerberg becoming billionaires at 26, what once marked a head-start in learning is becoming modern day's level playing field.

Tech literacy in a globalised world Basic technological know-how is not enough for our children. If they will venture out to compete in a globalised

arena, they must be techliterate with complete knowledge of technological interfaces and access to the infinite learning opportunities that they offer. We are no longer frogs inhabiting a protected pond of water. If we are to survive the tides in the larger ocean, we definitely need to equip our children with the tools to tap their untapped potential.

Inculcating intellectual independence We must encourage children to forage for knowledge on their own through technology without providing them easily digestible meals of controlled rote-based learning. Developing these skills of self-study and research will create the experience of an intellectual independence for children, which will be very useful for them in their academic and professional life.

Promote the spirit of innovation India's anachronistic education system of chart paper-based learning and mundane scientific experiments stifles curiosity. Technology offers a pattern of learning that provides room to think differently. Innovation and technology form the relationship of the future and our children need to keenly participate in this relationship to remain globally relevant.

Encourage interactive learning Don't believe in the misconception that technology-based learning is a passive medium of information transmission. Instead of the monotonous textbook format, technology makes information come alive through interactive e-books, animated videos, photographs and textto-speech audio. This may

make children more receptive to the information being shared with them.

Role played by parents With busy work schedules, parents often find it difficult to keep a tab on their children's online activities and vet cannot avoid their engagement with the internet. Many child-friendly platforms have monitoring mechanisms that help parents regulate children's activities through reports and parental control settings. Rather than letting technology become a divisive factor, parents must be open to using its interactive features to spend time and bond with their children.

Enable flexible learning Technology-based learning offers flexibility in the learning process as opposed to traditional methods. Online platforms let us access information from the entire world at the flick of a finger. The convenience of pausing, rewinding, and recording the source of information lets children grasp ideas at their own pace too. At the same time, they will have an opportunity to study the subjects they enjoy at greater depth than stipulated by the school curriculum.

As told to Anirbaan Banerjee



BY SIDHARTH DHINGRA. **FOUNDER & BUSINESS** DEVELOPMENT MANAGER. FUNTUSE, A SUBSCRIP-TION-BASED PLATFORM FOR INTERACTIVE CONTENT, PANIPAT

SKILL THE GAP

Localowls has a neat assembly of instructors on their website enabling people to acquire their chosen craft



What is it?

In 2014, banking professionals Sucharita Choudhury, 40, and Rashmi Jalan, 43, based out of Mumbai, quit their decade long careers to realise their passion in education. They decided to start a platform where instructors and learners could easily connect over a variety of fields such as academics, performing arts, music, cooking, calligraphy and languages. Being mothers themselves, they understood the convenience of having a single simplified portal to choose classes for their children.

The growth

Localowls took off in October last year with a self-funded investment of ₹35 lakh. In the course of ten months, the two women built an extensive database of 2,396 experts and 3,951 classes in Mumbai, with the help of eight others in the team.

The challenge

"Finding motivated people to work has been one of our biggest challenges. We were lucky to find a good team," says Choudhury. Another challenge has been building trust among users such as parents who do not easily believe in data provided on online forums for their child's education.

The future

The duo plan to cover more cities and have already initiated ground operations for the Pune website. The registration for teachers to create a profile is free now but they may be charged a nominal fee at a later date.

Inception of Localowls.
The team initiates
ground operations to
prepare a database

Mumbai website goes live, listing more than 2,300 teachers to choose from

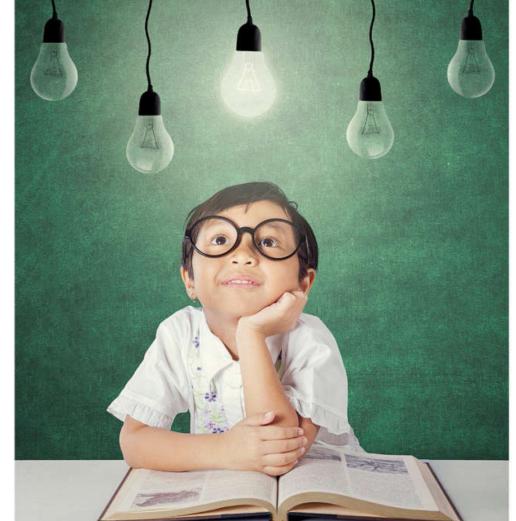
Choudhary and Jalan to launch Pune edition

MILESTONES

OCTOBER 2014

JUNE 2015

DECEMBER 2015



Education has turned into an automated industry that requires a new perspective

OUT WITH THE OLD

he primary goal of education is to create individuals capable of envisioning new things without emulating what previous generations have churned out. They are the creators, inventors and discoverers. Education was initially passed on from father to son and families continued to follow the same process across generations. The first step of schooling was introduced with formal gurus imparting education to a select few, limiting its benefits to the elites. The industrial revolution however made it possible for books to be mass produced and knowledge to be made available and accessible. Education thus became an industry where knowledge was imparted for a fee by a set of teachers following a prescribed syllabus, which was uniform across fields and across imparting institutions. This is the industrial approach to education. Codified standard operating processes were followed to deliver both quantity and quality of output at a cost lower than revenue. This is where the education industry stands today, left behind in the change that has swept the world since it is too codified. The need for change in this industry is imperative, especially if you consider that it is failing at the output level with an abysmal rate of employable youth. The pertinent question though is why is the system not delivering what it was designed to deliver?

Need for competitive education Fundamentally, the education industry does not work on a competitive basis. It's only the secondary, and particularly, the tertiary level education system that follows the principle of competitiveness and attract talent in the form of teachers and students. Primary education is imparted as a fundamental right by the government and hence tends to be low in quality with focus on quantity instead. However, most parents are willing to pay for quality education. As per recent reports, the Karnataka government-driven "free" schools are failing to attract students, who prefer private schools. This is a confirmation of the shift in the market dynamics. To improve quality, education will have to follow the basic principles of competitiveness and move away from government as an anchor delivery arm, restricting its role to monitoring the rules of the game.

Quality educators and infrastructure key Since education does not follow the basic market dynamic principles, the quality has always suffered. There are two key aspects of education quality. The first one is the quality of the deliverer or teachers. Repeated data from across states in India shows that the quality of teachers in schools is low which in turn leads to low quality of education imparted. The second aspect of this quality is the infrastructure or the tools



of imparting education. Technology today has made it possible for education to be imparted by good quality teachers remotely to students thus reducing the dependence of local teachers. Can we not record lectures of the best teachers and make them available free of cost?

Align syllabus to social changes Efficiency in the context of education can be defined as the end result which is quite low. We most urgently need to have a look at our current syllabus and approach and align it with the society

which has transitioned from an agriculture to manufacturing to a service economy. At the same time, we need to change our filter of judging young ones purely from their academic scores to alternate talent they might be demonstrating in their early days. The second dimension of efficiency in case of education is the cost of delivery. Operational logistics do not allow students in far off locations to have access to a teacher who is an expert in the subject. With virtual classrooms, if you have a teacher in one location, and she is good at science, then technology can easily be used to virtualise her to other locations.

Need to innovate Innovation drives col-

laboration which helps in exchange of ideas and well-fuelled teamwork. This is one of the most important aspects for learning. Innovation comes to rescue today with a single laptop, a webcam, a projector and an internet connection; a teacher can therefore broadcast and begin collaboration with any other classroom. As groups of learners coalesce around shared passions online, they experience something that is difficult to replicate in the physical space.

Making education affordable The financial model today

offers education free of cost or at a subsidised price provided by the government as a fundamental right of the citizen, but only till the primary level and then leaves the student to fend on own for higher education. Students depend on parents or their earnings or loans to finance the same. The question but is can we not turn it on its head and treat all education free and offer loan to the student? That way we would be able to cater to the varied skill sets of students which may not be in the direction of academic excellence but can be nurtured. And it also takes away the eliticism in imparting of education and provides everyone an equal and better opportunity for learning.



BY SHWETA APRAMEYA, FOUNDER & CEO, YTS SOLUTIONS, MOBILE MONEY SERVICE PROVIDER, MUMBAI

"Focus on your journey"

Multitasking requires patience, perseverance and presence of mind

ame, success and money have always been fleeting concepts. Trust, on the other hand, is something that takes ages to build and usually retains a lasting impact on people. With the advantage of time and nearly a century of its existence, the Baidyanath group of companies has established itself as one of the most reliable Ayurveda brands in the world. Started with humble beginnings from the Baidyanath Dham in Jharkhand in 1917, Pandit Ramnarayan Sharma left a legacy that was passed on to his grandson Vikram Baidyanath, 40, in 2005.

Learning the ropes Baidyanath completed his schooling at the prestigious Doon School in Dehradun before getting his bachelor's degree in commerce from Sydenham College in Mumbai. The following seven years between 1998 and 2005, were spent in the UK gaining education and experience. Within this period, he procured a master's degree in International Management and Marketing from the University of Leeds and another postgraduate degree in Industrial Relations and Human Resource Management (HRM) from London School of Economics (LSE) and Political Science. Not a year was wasted as he spent his time earning job experience by working in a Sheffield-based medical consultancy firm called Medilink for two years and then at a healthcare recruitment company called Capital Staffing Services in London for three years before returning to India. "Throughout my student and working years in India and England, I was mindful of the fact that I wanted to eventually join my family business and apply the knowledge and experience I was gaining to better Baidyanath", says the business tycoon, who might have had a privileged childhood but never took it for granted.

Bringing in a touch of modernisation He was appointed CEO of the Baidyanath group in 2005, and since then, he has brought in many structural changes in the organisation. He first revamped the HRM (human resource management) policy to include a professional hiring system and performance-based rewards to generate efficient employees. Introduction of new marketing strategies and an unwavering focus on research and development has been one of the main contributions to the success of the firm in the last decade, according to Baidyanath. "My father and my uncles, in many ways, belong to the old school of thought and have been rather conservative and autocratic in their working style. It has been a tremendous journey to get them to



become more flexible in their approach and to delegate power and responsibility to the new generation. We are at a very exciting juncture, where an amalgamation of the old and the new is taking place," he says. In this last decade, he has tried introducing a decentralised system of operation for more efficient use of resources in the company.

His advice to young people Baidyanath's mother, Dr Madhu Sharma has been his greatest inspiration and guide in life. He says, "She taught me to put in my best effort and not be obsessed with the final outcome. I learned never to be jealous of anyone and to focus on my own journey. Empathy and forgiveness are qualities I have picked up from my mother over the years." He suggests young people trying to make it in this field to follow their heart, be true to themselves and retain honesty. He strongly believes that it is easy for a person to multitask and be successful with presence of mind, patience and perseverance.

Making the first job Count

Be a team player and learn from mistakes when starting your first job

The sleepless nights spent preparing for finals, working on your resume and stressing over job applications and interviews are behind you. You have successfully graduated and secured your first job. However, this is just the beginning. Regardless of where you've decided to work, there are some basic tips you can use to prepare yourself for life at the workplace.

Be adaptable Adaptability is of utmost importance, especially at the workplace. All throughout our academic lives, we have chosen our friends and the people we spend time with. But at the workplace, the scenario is starkly different. You will have to spend time working with and among individuals from eclectic backgrounds, with widely different opinions and from generations. Being sensitive towards these differences and opening up your mind to a world that's unfamiliar to you is crucial.

Always keep in mind that all of you are working

Be receptive to learning A lot of people will tell you that no amount of education can replace real life experience. While a quality educational background can provide you with a strong foundation, your workplace experience is where you truly develop your skills. Regardless of whether you were at the top of your class in college or not, nobody expects you to know how everything works at your first job. Organisations want to find somebody who is curious, confident enough to ask questions, is open to feedback and eager to improvise. Your first job is an ideal platform for you to enquire, seek guidance and

towards a common goal.

learn from your mistakes. Prioritise your time In

college, all-nighters, flexible work hours, spontaneous nights out and impulsive decisions are a way of life.



BY PALLAVI JHA CHAIRPERSON AND MANAGING DIRECTOR, DALE CARNEGIE TRAINING, INDIA

Professional life however, is not quite the same. Along with working eight-hour days through the week, there will be several aspects of your personal life which will require attention. The same routine you had back in college is not going to cut it and will eventually take a toll on your mental and physical health. The solution to adapting to your drastically new environment is to manage your time effectively. Be prepared to start planning your week in advance as this will provide you with some

> structure that enables you to prioritise what's important while allowing you to make time for yourself.

Learn from mistakes This point specifically plays a significant role when it comes to your professional life. Often, people perceive failure as negative, but at a job, especially one that you're new to, mistakes are what make you.

> Not repeating those mistakes is where success lies. As American political activist, Ralph Nader once said, "Your best teacher is your last mistake." The ability to take risks is vital, as it is a leadership trait. But the instinct for it needs to emerge in the early phase of one's career.

Understand the work culture Given

that every organisation has its own unique culture, as a new employee, it's important to observe the values and norms prevalent in your company. That said, it should not change who you are and hope-

fully you can be instrumental in stretching some boundaries which may even be welcome as a breath of fresh air. Being aligned totally with your organisation's work culture will be highly instrumental in your seamless transition into the new environment.



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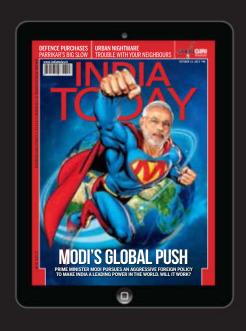








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COVER STORY

Pampering Reinvented Innovative spa therapies are attracting the young like never before.

FEATURE

Goddess of Dissent Arundhati Roy discusses the right to dissent, her dislike for literature festivals and why she will always be seen as an activist.

FEATURE

A Canvas Called Opportunity Painter Sidharth talks about giving back to Punjab by mentoring its young artists.

CITY BUZZ

10 things to look forward to 20 A checklist on what to do. where to go and what to eat.



Photograph by SANDEEP SAHDEV Model SIMPLY SINGH Location QUAN SPA

Cover photo by SANDEEP SAHDEV Cover model GRACE BASNETT

UR PICK of the month



Oktoberfest Revelry

Till October 31

Don't worry if you can't make it to Munich for the annual Oktoberfest because the Beer Café is bringing all the festivities from the Schottenhamel tent, right here to your neighbourhood. Indulge in buckets of authentic German beers including Erdinger Weissbier and Valentins. Don't forget to hum to the cheerful Bavarian tunes.

Drinks for two between Rs 1200 and Rs 1400 At Beer Cafe, Elante Mall, Chandigarh Tel 0172 500 5000

Want to tell us about an event? A new store? A restaurant? People doing interesting things? Anything newsworthy? Please email us at: simplypunjabi@intoday.com

PAMPERING

INNOVATIVE THERAPIES ARE MAKING YOUNGSTERS

BY SUKANT DEEPAK

NUTS OVER FRUIT

QUAN SPA, JW MARRIOTT

O FOR Fresh Tropical Wrap. **SOAK IN** Promising an exotic treat for the body and the mind, this therapy is about using natural exfoliation by sesame and oatmeal and then enjoying a body wrap of fresh tropical fruits like banana, papaya, pineapple, besides honey and yogurt. Utilising the natural enzymes papain and bromelain which mimic alpha-hdroxy acids, this mildly exfoliating wrap leaves the skin noticeably smooth and revitalised. **HOW IT HELPS** Revitalises and softens dull and dry skin. Natural antioxidants in fruits help give the skin a natural glow

KNOW MORE Introduced in 2014, the Fresh Tropical Wrap is one of the most popular therapies offered by Quan Spa at Marriott. Spa Manager, Ankit Rawat feels that people who frequent spas are always on the lookout for innovative therapies.

POCKET WISE Rs 2,500 excluding taxes **DURATION** 60 minutes

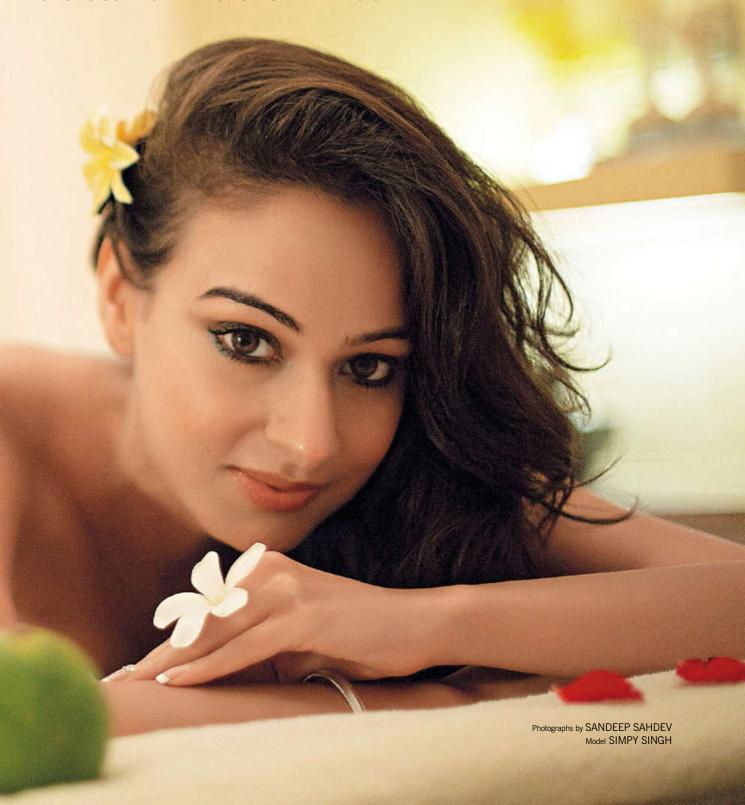
AT Quan Spa, JW Marriott, Plot no: 6, B, Dakshin Marg, Sector 35, Chandigarh TEL 0172 395 555

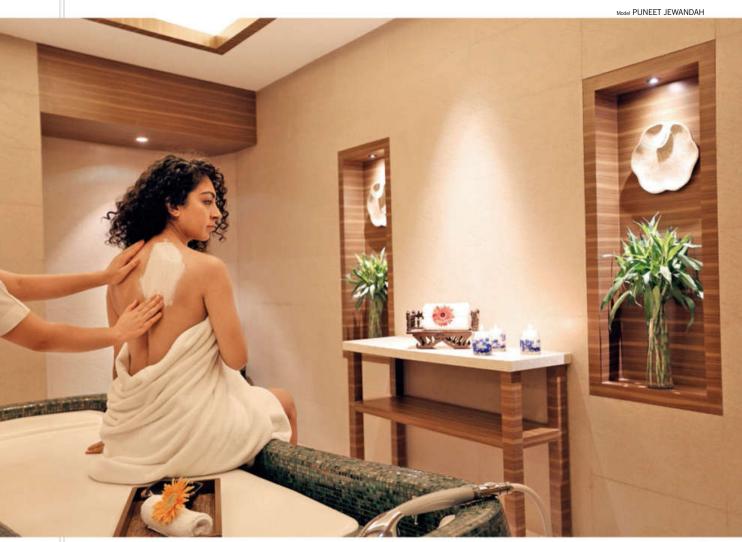
Fresh Tropical Wrap at Quan Spa, JW Marriott



REINVENTED

THRONG TO SOME OF THE TOP SPAS IN THE REGION





A therapy at Rejuve The Spa, at The Lalit

THE TURKISH AFFAIR

REJUVE THE SPA, THE LALIT CHANDIGARH

O FOR The Hamam Experience. **SOAK IN** One of the very few properties in the region to offer this therapy, The Hamam Experience at Rejuve the Spa, The Lalit Chandigarh is an elaborate ritual which involves a luxurious choice of scrubs that prepare the skin for hydrating suds to awaken every cell on the body's surface. This is followed by a warm relaxing rinse with a hand held hydro therapy massage brush to help release tension as the therapist washes away the scrub without you having to leave the comfort of the bed followed by choice of body wrap. The body is then subjected to detoxifying steam and moisturiser is applied all over the skin to culminate in this out-of-theworld experience.

HOW IT HELPS Detoxification, stress release and skin hydration.

KNOW MORE Introduced in April 2015, the Hamam Experience has become an instant hit with regular spa goers looking for an elaborate session that not only promises complete body renewal but also an anti-ageing effect. "This experience involves several elements including body scrub, rubbing, rinsing, body wrap and detoxified steam in one therapy. People love it because of this," says Krishna Semwal, the spa manager.

POCKET WISE Rs 5,000 plus taxes **DURATION** 90 minutes

AT The Lalit Chandigarh, Rajiv Gandhi IT Park, Near DLF Commercial Complex, Chandigarh **TEL** 0172 3007777



THE BIG HIGH

HEADMASTERS, CHANDIGARH

O FOR Cloud 9 therapy. **SOAK IN** This is a 60-minute full body massage followed by fifteen minutes on a hot floating water bed. Offering a unique, open design and an 'all-side-ofbody' massage, the treatment uses travelling jet systems, with customised pressure ranges, for a full body massage. Using water-through-air technology for maximum pressure massage, this treatment is much favoured not just by the jet-lagged but by people across age groups. And yes, you constantly float on water without getting wet at all.

HOW IT HELPS Complete relaxation, automated water pressure ensures precise targeting of pressure points.

KNOW MORE Don't let all the sophisticated technology scare you. This dual process treatment, which involves a regular massage using specialised oils followed by a hydro therapy, is bound to leave you completely relaxed. Veer Kaul, the Managing Director of Headmasters says, "This therapy has gained phenomenal popularity over the past few years. Considering young corporates and businessmen no longer feel guilty about pampering themselves, this is the ideal treatment for those wanting a treat after a hectic week at work."

POCKET WISE Rs 5,000 plus

DURATION 60 minutes AT SCO 16-19, Sector 8 C, Madhya Marg, Chandigarh **TEL** 0172 455 7777



The Panchamrit treatment at Ranjit's Svaasa

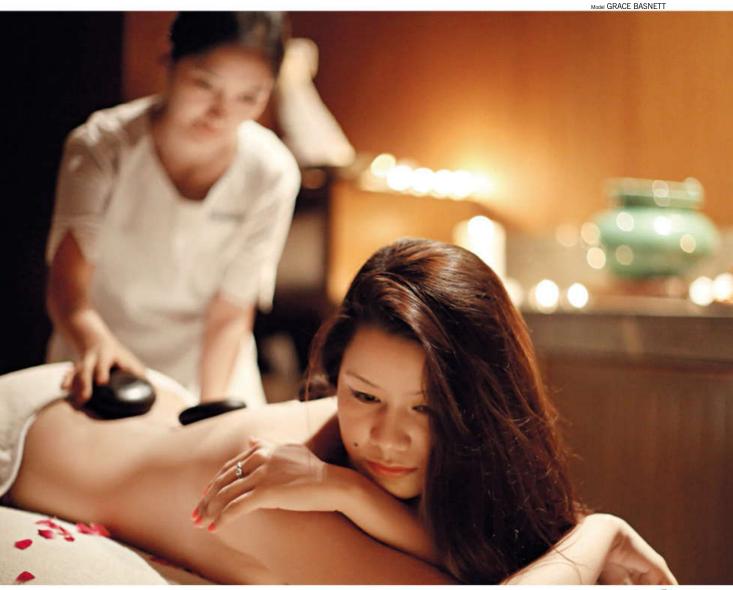
HERITAGE AND NOW

RANJIT'S SVAASA

O FOR Panchamrit Therapy with beer hair wash **SOAK IN** A soothing scrub with barley followed by a Panchamrit bath on the wooden *patti* made with different elements including clarified butter, whole milk, yogurt, honey and basil. Red wine is added as an additional ingredient to moisturise the skin. The ritual is followed by a vava (beer) hair wash which conditions the hair. The therapy is a perfect amalgamation of ancient and new techniques as masseurs trained in the art of traditional treatments combine it with new-age elements like red wine scrub and beer for hair.

HOW IT HELPS This treatment is great for complete body cleansing and mositurising.. **KNOW MORE** Essentially a form of cleansing and conditioning that leaves a glow and sheen on skin and hair, the Panchamrit treatment used to be a ritual followed by women before their marriage. "Now, nobody has the time for such an elaborate treatment at home. And this is where we come in. Popular especially during the summers, we have noticed that now it is no longer just the brides who want to experience this," says Abhimanyu Mehra, MD (Operations) of Ranjit's Svaasa. **POCKET WISE Rs 3.500**

DURATION 75 minutes AT 47-A. Mall Road, Amritsar TEL 0183256 6618



A therapy at Hyatt Amritsar

FUSE IT RIGHT HYATT AMRITSAR

O FOR Authentic Signature Treatment-SOAK IN Promising to relax your mind and body with a fusion of stretching, reflexology, Swedish massage, aromatherapy, deep tissue and Ayurvedic therapy, this treatment is all about experiencing the best from western and eastern schools of spa therapies. The mix of different treatments translates into a powerful therapeutic effect which is instrumental in increasing circulation and removing daily stress and tension from the body.

HOW IT HELPS Increases blood circulation, soothes sore joints, eases muscle tension, cramps,

and fatigue. soothes sore joints, eases muscle tension, cramps, and fatigue.

KNOW MORE Introduced two years ago, this therapy has caught the fancy of not just guests from across the country and abroad but also city residents. "This treatment, in particular, is quite popular among youngsters as they get to know about different styles of massages in one therapy," says spa manager Vinaya Jadhav.

POCKET WISE Rs 5,200 excluding taxes
AT Adjoining Alpha One City Centre, MBM Farms,
G.T. Road, Amritsar
TEL 0183 2871234



THE GODDESS OF

DISSENT

AUTHOR ARUNDHATI ROY SAYS YOUNGSTERS NEED TO BE AWARE OF POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES THAT ENGULF THEM

By SUKANT DEEPAK

he delicate calligraphy of The God of Small Things and the rage of her essays come together as she answers questions, releasing hand gestures and shadows even as the fantastic permed grays on her head decide to be careless. The delicate nose pin maintains its arrogance as she answers in whispers amidst a sea of old and new comrades with flowing beards looking at her. The peculiar vulnerability in the voice makes one more attentive. Much more receptive.

When Booker prize winning author Arundhati Rov was in Jalandhar in August to attend the birth anniversary of Punjabi revolutionary poet Avtar Singh Sandhu "Pash", organised by Pash Memorial International Trust, hundreds of people from the state's countryside decided to take their seats at the venue. Pindrop silence during her two-hour long lecture, punctuated only by the sounds of old wall fans, was followed by mobile phone camera flashes and rounds of photographs with the author, who has been frequently visiting Punjab's villages. Not to mention, grown-up sturdy Punjabi men touching

her feet.

ARUNDHATI ROY ATA GLANCE

1997 National Film Award for Best Screenplay for In Which Annie Gives it Those Ones

1997 Booker Prize for debut novel, *The God of Small Things*

2002 Lanan Foundation (USA) Cultural Freedom Award

2003 Special Recognition as a Woman of Peace at Global Exchange Human Rights Awards in San Francisco, US

2004 Sydney Peace Prize

2006 The Sahitya Akademi Award, which Roy declined to accept "in protest against the Indian Government toeing the US line by violently and ruthlessly pursuing policies of brutalisation of industrial workers, increasing militarisation and economic neo-liberalisation".

2011 Norman Mailer Prize (USA) for Distinguished Writing

2014 Featured in the list of Time 100, the 100 most influential people in the world

The interaction with Roy, who was recently listed as one of the 100 most influential people by Time magazine in 2014, is not linear. Here are some excerpts:

POET IN PASH'S VEINS

"Pash is not great just because he was a revolutionary. The fact he could reach out to even those who did not subscribe to any specific ideology, think on different planes, project his thoughts aesthetically without sounding absurd is what makes him stand out. The sheer genius of his verse will ensure he never dies," says Roy. Stressing that Punjab's iconic poet, who was killed by Khalistani militants on March 23, 1988, will continue to inspire future generations as he demonstrates an unparalleled ability to imagine. Roy says, "He gave a heart to the revolution. You cannot be a writer or a poet just because you believe in the leftist ideology.

For this 53-year-old author, getting labelled is dangerous, for there will be a fear of living in a ghetto. "An awakened writer's job is not to lecture or indulge in *naarabazi*. A revolutionary looks at justice everywhere—starting right from home. No matter what we are talking about, why must we forget the beauty in art and literature?"

MAO'S WAR CRY AND I

Talking about her essay Walking with the Comrades, that chronicles her journey to the heart of Maoist bastion—the jungles of Dantewada in Chhattisgarh—the author says that spending time with the tribals and Maoists was to get a clear picture of what was actually happening there. "Just because I wrote that essay does not mean I am a Maoist. I wanted to tell the world that for people in those neglected parts, it was a fight for survival. And

they are not terrorists just because India's massive and powerful media decided to label them so," she says.

Roy says Operation Green Hunt, launched against Maoists during the tenure of the UPA government, is still on, though silently. "The architects of the operation, who thought the whole country would support them when they unleashed massive war machinery against the tribals, realised their PR campaign was not going on the planned course. It is a war where the para military forces have been trained like the Army and instructed to unleash violence on their own people. Of course, we still like to call ourselves a great democracy," says Roy.

LOVING INDIA

The author says not many nations in the modern world can claim to have a strong tradition of rebellion and intellectual dissent that India has. "We, as a people, have fantastic wisdom in understanding dissent. The state had to pause Operation Green Hunt following a massive outcry from all quarters," says Roy. She believes the establishment is going great lengths to break the intellectual support that different movements may be enjoying. "An effort is being made to train our imagination. And to achieve the same, education and culture are being used as tools. Look at the textbooks today: words like dissent. revolution and class war have been erased. Appointments to important cultural centres are made on the basis of political affiliations and not merit," she laments.

II OF NGOS AND MISPLACED **PRIORITIES**

The writer insists that for most NGOs, the word justice has vanished from the vocabulary and the emphasis is only on human rights. "When you take away politics from justice, what remains is human rights. NGOs have become all about identity politics; why don't they even utter the word capitalism?" she asks. Stressing that women's rights groups have failed to focus on and

EXPERTS ON POET AVTAR SINGH SANDHU "PASH"

66 Pash is not dead. His voice still resounds. At a young age, he effectively brought forth different problems plaguing the society around him through powerful idioms and metaphors. Pash was not only a Punjabi poet but belonged to everyone." -NAMVAR SINGH, Literary Critic

"A major reason why I translated all of Pash's works into Hindi was the fact that he will always remain relevant. Look at the contemporary society. Don't his words sound true even today? Look around, don't we have injustice, inequality and fascism in different forms prevalent all round? 99 -CHAMAN LAL. Translator

highlight the condition of women living in the countryside, Roy cites the example of Chhattisgarh and those involved with the Narmada Bachao Andolan. "Does anyone even want to get into the economic ramifications of displacement the Narmada project has had on women? What about women at the receiving end of violence unleashed by security forces in Chhattisgarh?" she asks.

Speak to her about the recent government crackdown on organisations such as Greenpeace and Roy stresses the state can tolerate dissent only to some extent. "It's alright to have a lion around. But only a pet one will do," she says.

"There seems to be a suggestion that books should be written only to win a Booker Prize, appeal to popular sensibilities and become bestsellers. Cross that line and the word activist is attached to your name."

-ARUNDHATI ROY

III OF LITERATURE FESTIVALS AND ABSURD SUBTEXTS

Roy, who prefers to stay away from all literature festivals, claims the undertone in such events is that an author should write stories that appease, and not awaken. "There seems to be a suggestion that books should be written only to win a Booker Prize, appeal to popular sensibilities and become bestsellers. Cross that line and the word activist is attached to your name. Sadly, a writer is not expected to understand injustice," she says.

II FACT VS FICTION

Though refusing to elaborate about her next work of fiction, as "fiction is about a completely different rhythm and this is no place to talk about it". the writer clarifies that it would be unfair to slot her fiction and essays in different brackets. "Do you really believe I could have written those essays if I were not a writer? Doesn't everybody see structure, journalism and scholarship in those writings (essays)?" she asks, before joining the sea of people who have come to see her.

She then gets lost in them.





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A CANVAS CALLED **OPPORTUNITY**

DELHI-BASED PAINTER SIDHARTH WANTS TO GIVE BACK TO PUNJAB. HIS BIRTHPLACE, BY INVITING TALENTED YOUNGSTERS FROM THE STATE'S COUNTRYSIDE TO LEARN IN ONE OF HIS STUDIOS



By SUKANT DEEPAK

e may now be one of the most popular artists in the contemporary Indian art world, but Delhi-based painter Sidharth insists the journey was marked by several milestones of back-breaking struggle, which he can never forget. "I could not sell anything till the age of 42. Imagine how I survived," says the 59-year-old, who started off as a signboard painter in his native village Bassian in Ludhiana district as an apprentice to a local village mason, from him, he learnt the art of creating murals and friezes.

The artist then went to Dharamshala to understand the techniques of Thangka paintings from Tibetan monks in McLeod Ganj, besides working for some time with renowned artist Sobha Singh at his studio in Andretta in Himachal Pradesh. "After completing

Photograph by CHANDRADEEP KUMAR

my Diploma in Painting from the Government College of Arts in Chandigarh, I spent some years in Sweden, before finally settling down in New Delhi," he says. Sidharth has now decided to sponsor at least five

Sidharth has now decided to sponsor at least five young students from Punjab's countryside every year to work in one of his studios in Kaladham, Greater Noida. The project, undertaken by his newly-established foundation, Folksy Gods, has been launched not just to train the students further but also to acquaint them with the nuances of the art world. "I have always dreamt of starting this kind of a personal space in a metropolitan for young artists as I know from my personal experience how tough the art world can be to an artist who hails from a small town," says the painter.

Half of the artists' work produced in six months will go to the foundation and will be divided among the financers, who have offered to pitch in. The foundation will bear the expenses of promoting the artists.

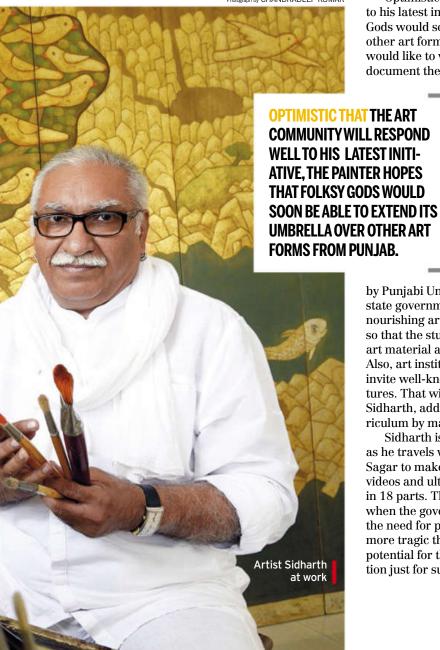
Optimistic that the art community will respond well to his latest initiative, the painter hopes that Folksy Gods would soon be able to extend its umbrella over other art forms from Punjab. "In the near future, we would like to work for promotion of crafts, music and document the folk traditions from the state as well."

Talking about the current art scenario in the state, the painter, admits there was an urgent need to bring forward promising youngsters not just from the urban areas but also the countryside who have grown up with folk traditions and respond naturally to traditional arts. "Just because they cannot talk about major art movements or Renaissance painters does not mean they lack potential," he says.

Sidharth, who was conferred an honorary Doctor of Letters degree

by Punjabi University, Patiala in 2002, feels that the state governments have to play a proactive role in nourishing artists. "There has to be a system in place so that the students can be provided studio space and art material at subsidised rates once they graduate. Also, art institutions need to make concerted efforts to invite well-known artists from India and abroad for lectures. That will broaden the students' horizons," says Sidharth, adding that there is a need to revamp the curriculum by making it in sync with contemporary times.

Sidharth is currently working on his series 'Ganga', as he travels with the river from Himalayas to Ganga Sagar to make drawings, write a travelogue, shoot videos and ultimately create a 260-ft long painting in 18 parts. The painter hopes a time will soon come when the government and the private sector will realise the need for promoting young artists. "What can be more tragic than the fact that a person with immense potential for the arts is forced to take up another vocation just for survival?" he asks.





A CUT ABOVE THE

REST

By SUKANT DEEPAK

he conversation oscillates between her experiences of dressing up actors like Saif Ali
Khan and Malaika Arora, and women from
Ludhiana, Jalandhar and Amritsar who make it
a point to visit her store in Delhi every month.
Working for both the 'types' gave a unique experience
to designer Mandira Wirk, who was in Chandigarh in
August to participate in the JW Marriott's annual wedding show, Shehnaai.

The ace designer believes the Punjab market is evolving like never-before. "I have always enjoyed a huge clientele from this part of the country. But what is amazing is the ability of people here to adapt to global trends at a breakneck speed," she says.

Stressing that Punjab is no longer about heavy clothes and elaborate accessories, Wirk, whose work has always been about sharp lines and straight cuts that exude a certain neatness, says, "It is a cliché that women here are always dolled up. Yes, when I got married 15 years back, it was all about those six kg uncomfortable lehengas that gagged your skin. But young Punjabi brides now want to wear stuff on their wedding

day which allows them to shake a leg. Bright red has given way to pastels and midnight blue. These are interesting times where clumsy is out, sleek is in."

Wirk feels the contemporary, well-travelled Punjabi woman is willing to experiment and trust her designer with something revolutionary for her. "Even when it comes to weddings, these young brides beg me to offer something out-of-the-box. The best part is they come well-researched and want to

AS FASHION DESIGNER MANDIRA WIRK GETS SET TO LAUNCH HER LINE OF WESTERN FORMALS, SHE CALLS UPON INDIAN DESIGNERS TO SEE THE FAIRER SEX IN A NEW LIGHT

be part of the entire design process," she adds.

All set to launch her latest line that will concentrate on the professional woman, the designer laments that until now women in India had little options when it came to work clothes. "You could either wear Indian or those mass-produced ethnic drapes. Comfortable westerns have not entered the work place yet. This is what we plan to change. My line, which will be launched in collaboration with an Indian clothing company,will have well-structured jackets, trousers, skirts and dresses and spoil the serious corporate woman. And not just those with a size eight. It's high time we designers understood the dynamics of the market. The pleasure of seeing your clothes being worn by a person who is not a celebrity is unparalleled," she says.

Talk to her about the overdose of fashion weeks and the same names dominating the shows every year, with little participation by fresh designers, and Wirk says, "I would not like to get into the politics of fashion. Let us not forget that I have attended way too many of such weeks," says the designer, whose line of *phulkari* with a modern twist has enjoyed immense success not just in Punjab but all across the country.

Fashion institutes even in the smallest towns of

Punjab may make great business sense for the owners but Wirk feels such places, instead of erecting fancy buildings to attract clients, need to concentrate on one core area-faculty. "How can you even think of opening a fashion school if you do not have a good faculty and syllabus that introduces the students to latest market trends? Why not invite designers from different parts of the country for live demonstrations and lectures so as to give the students an idea about the real world," she concludes.

UPDATE THE WARDROBE

SHE HE

Try some new colours—wine can be magical.

Buy shift dresses that you can wear to work and also in the evenings.

A well-tailored jacket is indispensable.

Nothing beats a draped top in class and elegance.

Tulip dresses make an evening come alive.

You can never go wrong with peplum jackets and tops. They suit all body types.

Bring some colour to the wardrobe. Move beyond blue and black.

A crisp white shirt remains a head-turner.

Buy some pocket squares. They change the mood of the clothes instantly.

Loosen your pockets and invest in some nice formal and semi-formal shoes.

You have no idea what your bandgala can do to people around.

Don't forget that Indian wear is sexy—a crisp linen kurtapajama works wonders.



THEROAD FROM HIS ARCHIVE TO BERLIN

FILM DIRECTOR RAJEEV BHATIA, WHOSE FILM *PAGDI:*THE HONOUR HAS MADE HISTORY BY BEING THE FIRST
HARYANVI FILM TO WIN TWO NATIONAL AWARDS, HOPES
THE STATE GOVERNMENT WILL TAKE ADEQUATE STEPS
TO ENCOURAGE FILMMAKERS

By SUKANT DEEPAK

t's nine in the morning and a group of 30 people are watching Iranian director Majid Majidi's *Baran* in a small room scattered with World Cinema DVDs in Haryana's Hisar district. There is a short break. Antonio Ricci and his wife Maria from Vittorio De Sica's *Bicycle Thieves* appear on screen. Suddenly, film director Rajeev Bhatia pauses the film and speaks

excitedly about a particular frame. Rewinds it to stress a point. Another break. Another film. Later, there are lectures and demonstrations on method acting.

This goes on for full two months. Of the 30 people in that room, 28 had never faced a camera before. They didn't even know that cinema outside the realm of Indian and Hollywood also existed. They still cannot believe their film Pagdi: The Honour has bagged not one but two prestigious National Awards—Best Film and Best Supporting Actress—a first in the history of Haryanvi cinema.

It's a different matter though that 45-year-old Bhatia has pitched the film in Hindi category. "It's not really a Haryanvi movie but the jury decided to put it in that category," says this gold-medalist graduate from Panjab University's **Indian Theatre** Department, 1992. Bhatia packed his bags for Mumbai

in 1994 to assist filmmaker Ketan Mehta for the movie, Oh Darling! Yeh Hai India, which released in 1995.

For someone who always wanted to be an actor, seeing what people went through in Mumbai precipitated him to stay behind the camera. "I don't even encourage people to come to Mumbai and try their luck. Everything might seem very romantic from a distance but you have to see it to believe the immense struggle one has to go through for getting even a small role," he says.

Bhatia shifted to directing serials for television in 1999 after work dried up for him in films. With more than 30 serials on his resume, including 11 for Ekta Kapoor, including Kasautii Zindagii Kay and Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi, the director says the small screen educated him on the art of working under constraints and managing quantity without compromising on quality. "TV has been instrumental in teaching me not just the finer nuances of direction but also other departments like production, not to mention seamless synergy," he adds.

The story outline of Pagdi had been ready in Bhatia's mind for a long time as he belongs to the interiors of Haryana but the news pertaining to honour killings getting splashed on the front pages of newspapers encouraged him to finally make the film. He says it was the need of the hour. "People have to be educated through every medium that violence and killing of young couples is not the way to keep alive the so-called traditions. Cinema, being such a great art form, can surely play an

important role," he says. "Pagdi was shot entirely in Hisar in 35 days. I wanted a real backdrop and staying here also helped me to interact informally with people and get

them to open up," adds the director.

However, the road to making this film was not devoid of bumps. "Two of my friends promised to produce the movie but they backed out at the last minute. My parents put in the finances and that is how we could roll,"

Bhatia recalls.

Hoping to showcase *Pagdi* at other prestigious festivals, the director stresses the film's sensibilities are bound to strike international chords. "We have sent the movie to several important international film festivals, including Berlin (Germany), Venice (Italy) and Rotterdam (Netherlands). I am keeping my fingers crossed," he says.

Though the film has been exempted from entertainment tax in Harvana, Bhatia feels the state needs to do a lot more to encourage local talent when it comes to filmmaking. "There is a major film institute in Rohtak-State Institute of Film and Television, spread over 22 acres—which happens to be the only one in the world to give a Bachelors degree in Cinema Studies. But how many people know about it? Also, what do the students do after graduating? Does the state have an industry? Are there any editing suites or dubbing studios? The government will need to formulate a policy so the talent from the state that has shifted to Mumbai comes back and makes films here," he says.

Bhatia feels his "responsibility" has increased manifold after the National Awards. The director says, "There is a certain pressure that all the work that I do in the future must meet international standards. In a way, it is a good thing. A challenging creative journey is something that every artist strives for," he concludes.

On the drive back through dusty towns, hordes of men in tall pagdis are gathered around hookahs. Women carrying water tumblers on their heads are walking home.



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WHEN MIRA BAI GIVES WAY TO RADHE MAA

IF WE THOUGHT OF OUR BHAGWAN AS COMPASSIONATE AND PROTECTIVE. THE GOD OF TODAY IS AN EMBODIMENT OF GRATIFICATION OF THE SENSES

adhe Maa is the new superstar in the 'godly' business. How else can you explain the shocking scene witnessed on national television where the guests engaged in a free-for-all slapping match in the name of the Maa? Even Shahrukh and Salman fans engage in a fight behind the veils of social media. So imagine the valour and motivation of dear Omji, the self-styled godman to defend our 'pure' and 'pious' Maa and like a road roller crushing anyone who

dare oppose. Great bhakti, and great devotion. I'm sure, Radhe Maa in a la Amrish Puri bravado will be saying, "Radhe Maa khush hoyi..."While we love pulling anyone down at the slightest pretext, who are these new religious superstars who have people idolising them and ready to defend them at all costs? It's a delightful pattern in our society because we've never stood up for anyone else. Ask any whistle blower's family, ask a martyred 'fauji's' family, ask anyone who's laid down life for the country. So what makes these new magicians so appealing?

Religion is the new business. It's a business of trying to be God, but with a little difference. Times have changed. So God must also change. So if we thought of our 'bhagwan' as compassionate, protective, inspirational, soul searching, our God of today is a glorious embodiment of gratification of the senses. If he has to be heard, he has to look good first. So the half-naked fakir is now a style icon. Sant Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh set the trend with trying to look like a rock star. I'm certain his Dera has a separate cell where all his elaborate Michael Jackson to an African prince look alike costumes must be kept. As an ambitious enterprise, I'm

sure some film companies can tie up for costume hire with the Dera because the range in headgear, from flowing gowns to shimmering bandgalas is so amazing.

While the Sant is generous with his colour choices, our Radhe Maa is hooked on red. And again like Sant Ram Rahim, her choice of flowing gowns is so endearing. While we lesser mortals are squabbling with our darzis for not getting the fit right, our religious heroes have everything zipped in place. Lucky them!



SAVITA BHATTI

It's good to look good. All of them know that if any bhakt falls asleep or is drowsy with all the pravachan, then at least he has some decent fashionable stuff to look at. So, great logic Sant Ram Rahim ji and Radhev Maa. Plus it goes to show that both of them have pure Punjabi blood running in them. So the flamboyance is so naturally justified. What would we Punjabis be without our showing off. So balle balle to the chak mak of our godmen and women. What I love about our new

superheroes is that they are so very human. We are taught to extol the virtues of Shri Ram, Lord Krishna, Jesus Christ, Nanak and Buddha. But in our heart we know their goodness will always be unattainable. With the new Gods around, you can have a sigh of relief. With rape, murder, dowry harassment cases pending against them, we feel they are one of us. A mother-in-law can so identify with Radhey Maa and many Indian men can identify with the lust of the likes of Asaram Bapu. Our gods are just like us. They look like us and they behave like us. Our gurus have struck gold too. You have Radhe Maa gliding down the sermons quite reminiscent of the Bollywood glamour. Sant Ram Rahim's Dera Sacha Sauda has over 700 acres of agriculture land in Sirsa, gas stations, market complexes and over 250 ashrams across the globe. Although his income hasn't been revealed officially, he is considered to be one of the richest gurus. And in today's world, what can be a bigger magnet than wealth, power and glamour?

So, from the common man to Bollywood biggies to our netas—all queue up outside these self-styled saints. Each looking for his own answer. The underprivileged

> seeking equality is denied in the traditional caste-based religion, the filmi is seeking the right superhit masala and the neta, as always, has his eyes on the votes. So while the number of disciples at mandirs, churches, mosques and gurudwaras thin out, these new saints gain a more formidable following with time.

Let's bow in reverence to all these new flashy godmen who have discovered that the biggest gold mine around is God.

savitabhatti@gmail.com

OUR GODS ARE JUST LIKE US. THEY LOOK LIKE US AND THEY BEHAVE LIKE US. SO **NIRVANAIS ATTAIN-ABLE AFTER ALL**



Photograph by SANDEEP SAHDEV

Q CHEERS TO TEA

Till October 30

ime to miss your boring daily tea and sip one with a difference. Opt for a quintessential variety of tea at The Gallery Bar. Served with finesse, the different tempting varieties of teas that have a cooling, slightly bitter and astringent flavor boast of a diverse profile including sweet, nutty, floral or with grassy notes and promise to appeal to your senses. Enjoy teas such as herbal and fruit tisanes, aromatic green tea, rooibos and oolong. WHERE The Gallery Bar, Hyatt Regency, Ludhiana Tea for two approx INR 400+ TEL 0161 407 1234





1 TO LOOK FORWARD TO

COCKTAILS ON THE BLOCK

ohali has got its first sports bar CamaCaaze and also become the pioneer in setting the trend for neighbourhood bars in Tricity. CamaCaaze, which will serve as Mohali's neighbourhood watering hole, for people who want to relax over a drink and tasty pub food, at a place close to their homes. The ambience promises to exhilarate your experience and lets you unwind in a luxurious setting with beautiful blue lighting that gives the place a surreal effect.

Thirty-eight-year-old industrialist and hotelier Inderdeep Singh was impressed by the culture of neighbourhood bars and pubs in England and felt that they were instrumental in promoting responsible drinking, with bar goers travelling shorter distances and getting back home early.

Singh insists that the cocktails offered are the bar's USP. Do try out 'CamaCaaze Killer'— the signature Cocktail. 'Burfilly Chaa' has a mix of Gin, vodka, Bacardi, old monk, tequila, triple sec, a dash of whisky with cranberry and guava juice.

For those who want it real hard, there's 'Only Iron Hearts' made using four different spirits. 'Jalandar' is another Cocktail which makes true the legend –'Drink Andar Banda Jalandar'. The bar has also tied up with a cab service provider. "We do not want getting back home becoming a trouble for our patrons. A community feeling based on responsibility is our bar's credo," says Singh.

MEAL FOR TWO Rs 600
AT SCF 13-18 Sector- 53, Mohali
TEL 0172 663 9333

By Sukant Deepak



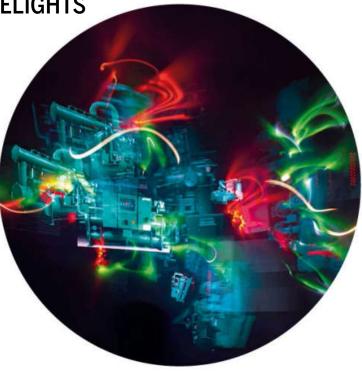
O DIGITAL ART DELIGHTS

October 27

Expose yourself to a combination of photography, street and digital art by Marko-93, a graffiti artist involved with the development of light-painting in real-time videos. He has helped urban arts enter the world of contemporary art. He spreads his unique aesthetics and his enlightening sensitivity all over, from in situ performances to collaborations, mural paintings, light-painting videos and workshops.

AT Alliance Française, Sector 36A Chandigarh

TEL 0172 2668627



4 ENCHANTING INTERIORS

October 16 to October 19

Be spoilt for choice at this exhibition that offers everything you'll need to spruce up your home this season. From artifacts to upholstery, the exhibition will present the latest trends in the world of interiors and home equipments. Don't miss out on the uniquely framed artworks, wooden artifacts, metal sculptures and curios.

AT Hotel Gulmor, Ferozepur Road, Ludhiana **TEL** 0161 277 1700



6 IBERIAN FLAVOURS

October 23 to 30

Spanish and Portuguese gastronomic traditions have been progressively enriched by the influence of conquering forces. Relish the most popular dishes from that region including Amêijoas àBulhãoPato, Caldoverde, Broa de Avintes and variety of tapas. MEAL FOR TWO Rs 2,200

AT Kitchen at 95, Hyatt Regency, Ludhiana **TEL** 0161 407 1234



O DATE WITH THE ART WORLD

October 10

Celebrate the life of the distinguished French art historian, novelist and statesman, Andre Malraux. An aficionado of modern art and architecture, Malraux is known for discovering the ruins of the Angkor Vat temples. AT Alliance Française, Sector 36 A Chandigarh **TEL** 0172 2668627







ROMANCE BY CANDLELIGHT

October 1 to October 31

Prepare for a special evening of romance. Above the city, under the setting sun, amidst the cool breeze and engulfed by luxury. Soothing ambience, tongue tickling delicacies and a variety of dishes to choose from. Enjoy an exquisite intimate candle light dinner and carry back fond memories.

MEAL for two Rs. 9000+

AT Terrace Pool Side, Hyatt Regency, Ludhiana TEL 8288800038

13 NAVRATRA ON A THALI

October 13 to October 22

Indulge in lavish mouth savouring delicacies in the special Navratra thali that includes starters, main course and desserts.

MEAL for two at Rs.1400 plus taxes

AT Tannur, Hyatt Regency, Ludhiana



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HOT LIST



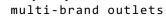
LOVE CATS

WITH NEW-AGE DÉCOR IDEAS FLOODING THE MARKET, IT'S TIME TO START TRAWLING

1 Aviator sunglasses, Rs 1,999,
 americanswan.com
2 Ballet flats by Crocs, Rs
 2,995, shopcrocs.in
3 Rusk Deepshine Color Smooth
Protective Serum, Rs, 1,475,
 amazon.in

4 Decorative platter, Rs 1695, Tea lite holder Rs 795 by Elvy Lifestyle, elvy.in

5 The ONE Power Shine Lipstick, Rs 499, in.oriflame.com 6 Mia earrings by Tanishq, Rs 9,160, all of their







4

HOT_LIST







1 Cotton top by Rena Love, Rs 3,200, koovs.com 2 Colour Dew nail enamel by Lotus Make-up, Rs 120, Makeup stores across the state 3 Handpainted bag, Rs 3,599, rangrage.in 4 Marquise hoops, price on request, velvetCase.com 5 Stole by Ahujasons, Rs 1,400, indiamart.com 6 Floral skirt, Rs 1,300, faballey.com 7 Backpack by Cord, Rs 4,800, email at info@cordstudio.in 8 Maharaja Key Holder, Rs 450, fabfurnish.com 9 Clubmasters by Ray-Ban, Rs 7,790, lenskart.com 10 Brass diyas by Indian August, Rs 8,500,















GNA University is one of the industry led universities, approved by Govt. of Punjab. Promoted by S. Amar Singh Educational Charitable Trust, Jalandhar, the university has lush green upcountry campus located at Sri Hargobindgarh on Phagwara -Hoshiarpur state highway with easy road, rail and air connectivity. Being an industry led university; GNA University has set out a very clear agenda to have strong industry academic interface.



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SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

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Toll free: 18001377006

HOT_LIST







2

1 Moccasins by Hidesign, Rs 3,295, hidesign.com 2 Leaves Do Weep Stud Earring, Rs 399, youshine.in 3 Hair Masque by Iraya, Rs 795, iraya.in 4 Krazy Mug Tapri Glasses (set of 6), Rs 1,809, pepperfry.com 5 Bracelet by Youshine, Rs 799, jabong.com







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Photograph by NILOTPAL BARUAH

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Editorial Team Rewati Rau, Kavyanjali Kaushik

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COVER STORY

Rest Assured

SIMPLY BANGALORE gives you a low-down on five must-try places that will help you relax and rejuvenate this season.

BUZZ

Into the City Three things to look forward to.

s-8

OUR PICK of the month

s-3

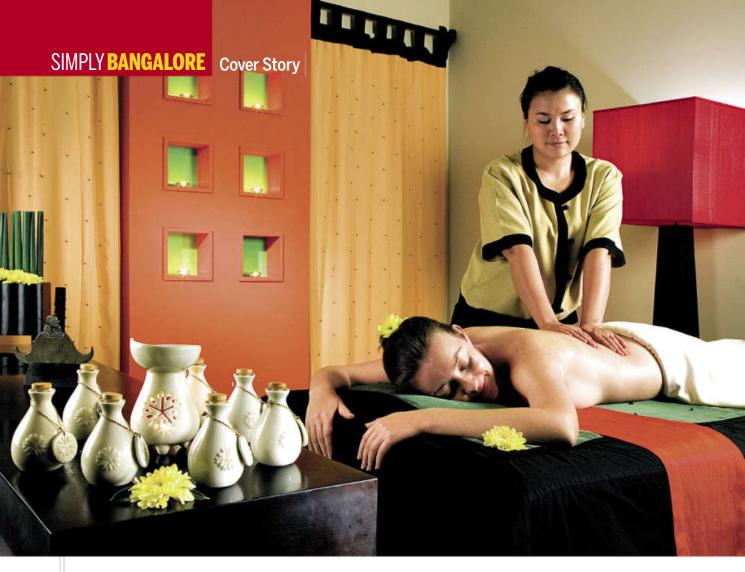
Contemporary Rhythms September 27

The renowned contemporary dance school in Bangalore, Nritarutya is back with its 4th edition of Prayog, which will feature three choreographies, Matsyaangnaa and Trishanku choreographed by Madhuri Upadhya and Chakra choreographed by Sathya BG. The performance is based on Indian philosophies and their relevance today. The duration of the performance is one hour fifteen minutes. In the proscenium of Indian dance space, Prayog (which means 'Experiment') is a brand that seeks to establish itself in the performing arts world as a dance theatre production par excellence. With Prayog-4, they will lead the Indian contemporary dance ethos into new directions. At Jagriti Theatre, Whitefield



Want to tell us about an event? A new store? A restaurant? People doing interesting things?

Anything newsworthy? Please email us at: simplybangalore@intoday.com



REST ASSURED

FIVE MUST-TRY SPAS TO HELP YOU RELAX AND REJUVENATE THIS SEASON

By Durba Ghosh

SETTLE DOWN

ANGSANA OASIS SPA

T

he opulent spa has been counted as one of the best luxury spa resorts in Bangalore. At Angsana Spa, which was launched in 2001, they lay emphasis on the use of aromatherapy oils, therapeutic sense of touch and fusion techniques from the East and West, to destress the body and mind. The spa bears the signature Angsana trademark colour scheme of cool lime green with bursts of tangerine in its soft furnishings. "We make sure the ambience is apt for relaxation. The guests come here to enjoy a complete experience," says spa manager Paweena. At Angsana, start your spa session with a destressing foot wipe and end it with complementary refreshments.

MUST TRY

The Duet package, which is specially designed for couples is an indulgent treatment. It includes a body polish, body massage and a luxurious facial. One can also opt for a combination package, which fuses the above mentioned service with their signature treatment of bamboo massage, wherein warm bamboos are placed on the body to relax the muscles and stimulate blood circulation.

- **COST** Rs 5,000
- **DURATION** 2.5 hours
- AT Main Doddaballapur Road, UB City, Whitefield



Photograph by NILOTPAL BARUAH

SPECIAL FEEL

SPA.CE THE SPA



ne of the first standalone spa ventures in Bangalore, SPA.ce is a pioneer of sorts. Nestled in a quaint bungalow in Indranagar, SPA.ce is known for its international standards and quality service. Launched in 2006 by a London-bred Punjabi woman, Nina Bual, SPA.ce has recently become India's first spa to use all-organic, chemical free products such as lemons, apricots, almonds, fresh herbs and spices and even charcoal.

"The spa industry in Bangalore has developed extensively over the past decade. People are now more aware of the products that are being used at the various spas and they demand nothing but the best. Earlier, spa services didn't have to adhere to any international standards but now, with greater awareness, quality service has become an important factor," says Nina Bual, proprietor of SPA.ce. The unique feature of this spa is that it also hosts parties. So if you want a spa themed-birthday bash or a bridal shower, this is the place to be.

SPA.ce offers a diverse range of treatments to suit all kinds of needs and their team of professional therapists tailor each step of the treatment and massage to suit your individual requirements.

MUST TRY

The Total Nourishment treatment is a wholesome service to calm anxious nerves. The treatment is a three-stage process, starting with an exfoliation face massage, followed by a steam pack, then a rejuvenating dark chocolate wrap. The package also involves a complementary detoxifying body masque, anointed with oils enriched with organic flavours of sweet almond and avocado. A purifying manicure and pedicure is the concluding part of the treatment.

- **COST** Rs 4,500
- **DURATION** 3.5 hours
- * AT Domlur, Cunningham Road

DEEP IMPACT

THE FOUR FOUNTAINS DE-STRESS SPA

he Four Fountains De-Stress Spa is a spa with a difference. Apart from relaxation and rejuvenation, the spa also offers treatments that are scientifically designed, keeping in mind the needs of every individual. Moreover, the therapies are quite pocket-friendly. The treatments are ideal for people suffering from specific physical issues such as back ache or knee pain.

Every Four Fountains Spa has an in-house qualified doctor who first measures the stress levels of each guest and only then suggests a spa therapy fit for him or her. Very soon, Four Fountains will be the first spa to use a computerised stress test that measures a person's ability to cope with stress using Heart Rate Variability.

"Our philosophy is to approach stressmanagement holistically through our programmes that offer a scientific combination of massage therapies and advice related to diet, lifestyle modifications and exercise. Because we are a part of the corporate life,

the other founding members and I understand the stress of office life," says Sunil Rao, co-founder of Four Fountain Spa.

Four Fountains De-Stress Spa was set up in 2007 in Pune by IIT alumni members Saurabh Garg, Anurag Kedia and Sunil Rao after working with Hindustan Unilever, KPMG consulting and the Tata Group.

MUST TRY

If your work-life is taking a toll on your health, then the Working Professionals Package is ideal for you. In this treatment, they give you a full body massage with sesame oil, working on the tense muscles of the back, neck, shoulder and foot, easing the aches and pains.

- COST Rs 2,000 to Rs 2,500
- **DURATION** 1 hour
- AT Koramangala, Jayanagar, Brookfields, Bannerghatta Road, Bellandur, Sadashivanagar, Kalyan Nagar, Indranagar

Photograph by NILOTPAL BARUAH





ocated at The Leela Palace, The Spa offers a resort-like experience, with lush green surroundings and aesthetically done-up massage rooms, where special care has been taken to ensure peace and quiet. The treatments at The Spa are a mix of Eastern European, and Ayurvedic practises. If you like to regularly indulge in spa treatments, then consider signing up for their annual membership. Members gain access to the spa, gym, steam, sauna as well as the indoor jacuzzi and pool.

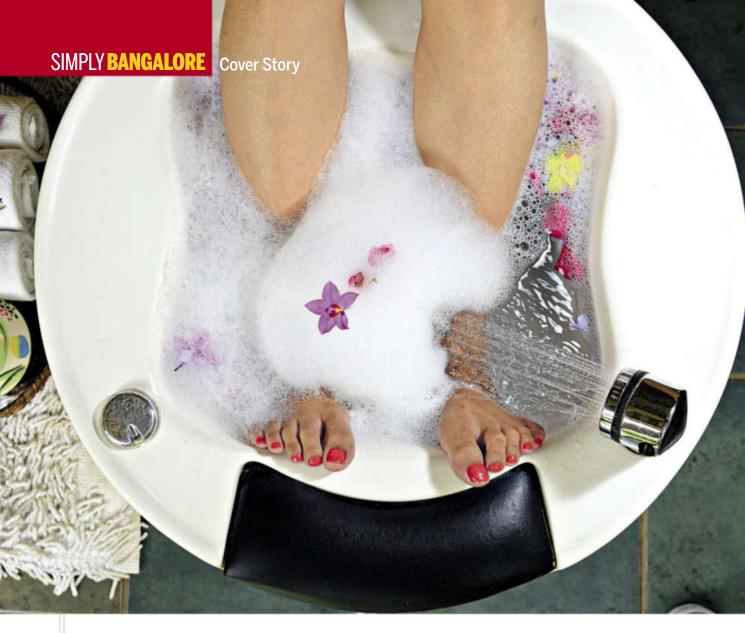
The Spa, which was inaugurated in 2001, has collaborated with acclaimed ESPA range of natural skincare products including anti-stress aromatherapy oils, pure seaweeds and cleansing muds for its western-style massages, while its Ayurvedic spa section sources all products from Ayurveda practitioners in Kerala.

"We take advice from experienced practitioners of both western and traditional Ayurveda massages. Our focus is primarily on offering relaxation in a lavish space. We do not indulge in treatment therapies. The experience of The Spa at Leela is one of pure luxury," says Sumanth Kumar, Assistant Spa Manager of The Spa at Leela Palace, Bangalore.

MUST TRY

One of the best treatments is The City Escape spa treatment at The Spa. A salt and oil scrub is applied on the body to exfoliate and soften the skin. The scrub is followed by a full body massage with essential oils using ESPA aromatherapy oils. The package includes an intensive facial which provides gentle exfoliation, an acupressure facial massage and an nourishing face mask.

- **COST** Rs 2,000 to Rs 6,000
- **DURATION** 1 hour 25 minutes
- * AT Old Airport Road



INSTANT FIX

THE 5TH ELEMENT SPA

T

raditional, yet trendy is how one would define The Fifth Element Spa. For an authentic Thai body spa, look no further than the Fifth Element. Winner of the Indian Salon Awards 2014 for best customer service and excellence, the spa promises a complete rejuvenation experience which includes sessions at their fitness centre, steam and sauna, jacuzzi and meditation centre as well. This bamboo-clad enclosure also offers happy hours discount for weekdays and a discount for couples.

Set up in 2007 by hospitality company KP Group, 5th Element follows a strict disciplined procedure of consultation and diagnosis, which is followed by treatments recommended basis that.

"None of our outlets are in commercial spaces and in high streets. Our Philosophy enforces us to take standalone bungalows in posh locations that ensure tranquillity. As an organisation, our prime focus is on quality and consistency," says Khanidra Barman, co-partner of 5th Element Spa.

* MUST TRY

The classic Traditional Thai Massage involves special Thai techniques, using the pressure applied from the palm, thumb, elbow, knee and feet on the aching muscles and pressure points of the body, releasing built-up tension knots. With this dry massage, involving stretches, you will experience an instant lightness in the body. Their therapists have been trained in these techniques by practitioners from Thailand, and hence it makes for a must-try experience.

- COST Rs 2,000 to 3,000
- **DURATION** 1 hour 30 minutes
- * AT Indranagar, MG Road, Whitefield, Race Course Road, Kammanahalli

TO LOOK FORWARD TO



Healthy Bites

This festive season, try out the healthy cookie bouquets and cake-cookie baskets from Ovenderful. The bouquets contain an assortment of cookies made from wholewheat, dates, walnuts, a combination of amaranth and ragi and more. Also try out their wholewheat spiced jaggery and orange pistachio semolina cakes.

Contact 9740255588; facebook.com/ovenderful

Funny Business

OCTOBER 10 TO OCTOBER 11 Expect a laughter riot at the inaugural edition of the Bengaluru Comedy Festival 2015 that will showcase over 50 artists from across the country. The exciting line-up includes Abish Mathew, Aditi Mittal, Biswa Kalyan Rath, Radhika Vaz and many more. At U.B. City Tickets omedywagon.com





Shaken and Stirred

Started as a small Tex-Mex joint, Pecos has been serving its popular beef cutlets to Bangaloreans for 26 years now. Patrons of the pub will be excited to know that it is now bracing itself to take the venture to the next level. Pecos is readying for a massive overhaul in interiors and food offering. The pub is also looking at exploring other metropolitan cities outside Bangalore as well. At No 189, Brigade Road Tel 41142038